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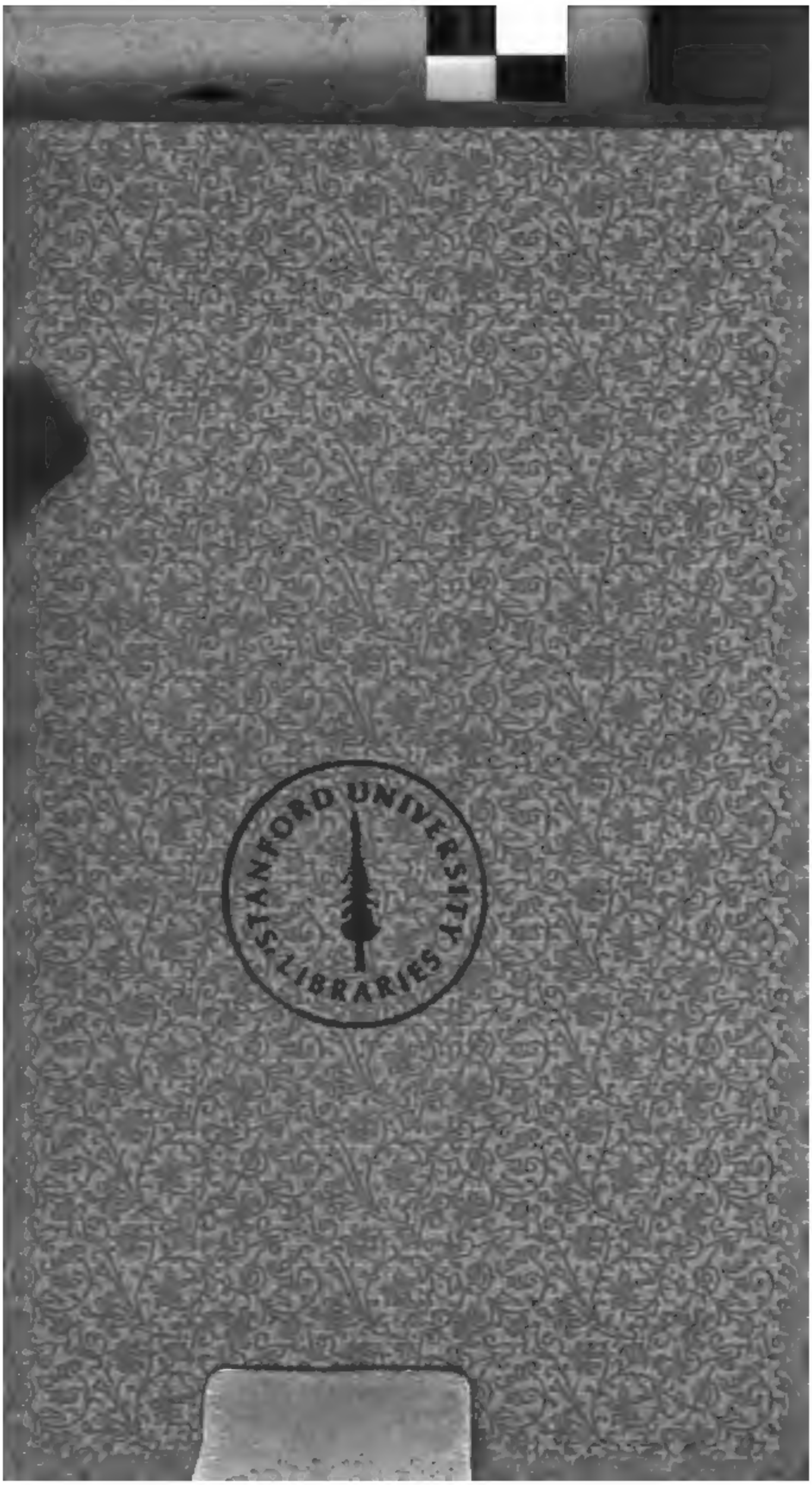
TALES OF WOMAN'S TRIALS

MRS. S. C. HALL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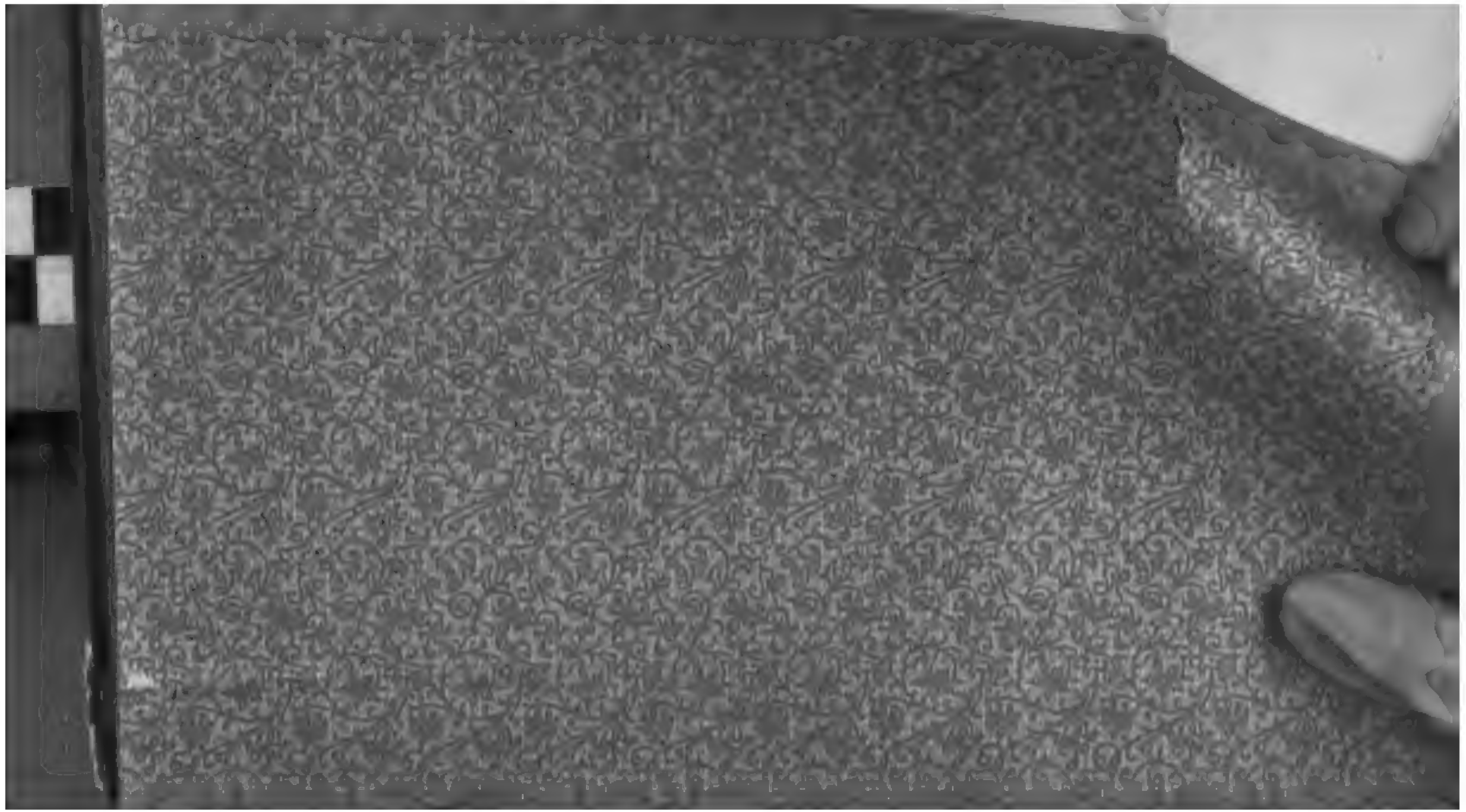

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Hall, Anna Maria Fielding

TALES

OF

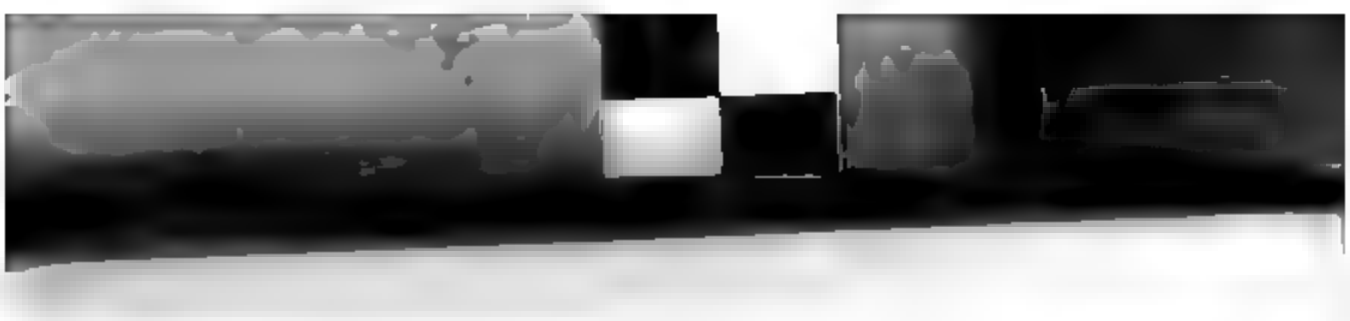
WOMAN'S TRIALS.

BY

MRS. S. C. HALL.

NEW EDITION WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.
1889.



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INTRODUCTION.

It is very pleasant to me, after the years that have elapsed since the "Tales of Woman's Trials" first found favour with the Public, to be called upon to write an Introduction to a new edition—the sixth edition—of a book with a title that my worthy publisher thinks too grave for the "taste of the times," but to which I cling with the affection that can be felt only for an OLD friend. I cannot therefore change it: the Tales are "TALES OF WOMAN'S TRIALS," and so they must remain.

Yet those who take the book in hand to read it, must be by no means under the impression that it is all gloom: far, very far, from it. There are few of these stories,—few, indeed, of any of my stories—that "end badly."

TRIALS are often TRIUMPHS: so I have endeavoured to depict them. Happiness is sure to arise from reckoning our troubles less, and counting our blessings more. Daily

experience gives force to the emphatic lines of the poet, that trials which seem to us "afflictions," are not really so:

> "But oftentimes celestial benedictions
> Assume this dark disguise."

My stories are, I believe, calculated,—certainly they are intended,—to afford cause for cheerfulness, and not gloom —not for murmuring, but for thankfulness and gratitude to the Giver of all Good.

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THE GOVERNESS.

PART THE FIRST.

"I HEAD my advertisement thus:—'Wanted—a Governess,'" commenced Mrs. Gresham, who had called upon her sister, Mrs. Hylier, to consult concerning the important document; Mrs. Gresham and Mrs. Hylier being both in want of resident governesses to educate their children. A visitor was also present, a Mrs. Ryal,

confessedly the "most clever woman" of the neighbourhood—an astonishing manager: but although the ladies desired her advice, they were somewhat in dread of her sarcasm.

Mrs. Gresham had repeated, "Wanted—a Governess," when an old gentleman, a Mr. Byfield, was announced. The trio of wives and mothers looked at each other, as if to say, "What a bore!"—and then Mrs. Hylier rose gracefully from her *chaise longue*, and, smiling sweetly, extended her hand, and welcomed Mr. Byfield with exceeding warmth of manner; while Mrs. Gresham and Mrs. Ryal declared aloud their delight at being so fortunate as to meet a neighbour they had so rarely the pleasure to see.

The party thus assembled were all inhabitants of the bustling yet courtly suburb of Kensington; and Mr. Byfield, being a rich and influential though a very eccentric man, was sure of the deference which people of small means are too prone to exhibit towards those whose fortunes are ample.

"Do not let me interrupt you in the least, ladies," said the old man, quietly taking his seat near the window. "Mr. Hylier promised I should look over these pictures by daylight; and when you have talked your own talk, there will be time enough for mine." The ladies, one and all, declared their conviction that his "talk" must be more pleasant and instructive than theirs. He smiled—shook his head—touched his hat (which he had laid at his feet), as if to say he would either go or have his own way; and so Mrs. Gresham recommenced reading—"Wanted—a Governess. Any lady possessing a sound English education, a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of instrumental and vocal music, and a perfect acquaintance with the French, Italian, and German languages; also with the rudiments of Latin——"

"Latin!" interrupted Mrs. Ryal. "Latin! why, what *do* you want with Latin for a pack of girls?"

"I thought," answered Mrs. Gresham, meekly, "that as there are but three girls, Teddy might do his lessons with them for a little while; and that would save the expense of a tutor."

"Oh, very good—very good," replied Mrs. Ryal; "then add

also, Greek: if the governess is anything of a classic, you'll get both for the same money."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Ryal; how clever you are! G-r-, there are two 'ees' in Greek?—also the rudiments of Latin and Greek."

"I beg your pardon once more," said the provokingly "clever lady;" "but make it Greek and Latin; that is the correct way."

"Greek and Latin, and the principles of drawing—if her character will bear the strictest investigation, may hear of a highly respectable situation by applying to Z. P."

"Post-paid," again suggested Mrs. Ryal.

"Of course," continued Mrs. Gresham; "and as the lady will be treated as one of the family, a high salary will not be given."

"Well," said Mrs. Ryal, "I think that will do. You have not specified writing and arithmetic."

"English education includes that, does it not?"

"Why, yes; but you have said nothing about the sciences."

"The children are so young."

"But they grow older every day."

"Indeed that is true," observed pretty Mrs. Hylier, with a sigh and a glance at the pier-glass. "My Helen, though only ten, looks thirteen. I wish her papa would let her go to school; but one of his sisters imbibed some odd philosophic notions at school, so that he won't hear of it."

"Certainly," observed Mrs. Ryal, "I will never again take a governess into my house to reside—they are all *exigeants*. One was imprudent enough to wish to get married, and expected to come into the drawing-room when there was company of an evening. Another would have a bedroom to herself; though, I am sure, no one could object to sleep in the same room with my own maid. Another—really the world is very depraved—occasioned a painful difference between Mr. Ryal and myself; and let *that* be a warning to you, my dear friends, not to admit any pretty, quiet, sentimental young ladies into your domestic circles. Mr. Ryal is a very charming man, and a good man; but men are but men, after all, and can be managed by any one who will flatter them a little. Of course, he is a man of the

highest honour; but there is no necessity for having a person in the house who plays and sings *better* than one's-self."

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Ryal!" exclaimed both voices, "you need never fear comparison with any one." The jealous lady looked pleased, but shook her head. "Well, at last I resolved to be my own governess—with the assistance of a *young person*, who comes daily for *three*, and sometimes I get *four*, hours out of her; and she is very reasonable—two guineas a month, and dines with the children. She is not *all* I could wish. Her manners are a little defective, for she is not exactly a lady. Her father is a very respectable man, keeps that large butter shop at the corner—I forget—somewhere off Piccadilly; but I prefer it, my dear ladies, I prefer it—she does all the drudgery without grumbling. Your officers' and clergymen's daughters, and decayed gentlewomen, why, their high-toned manners—if they never speak a word—prevent one's being quite at ease *with* them, though they are, after all, only governesses."

"But," suggested Mrs. Gresham, mildly, "lady-like manners are so very necessary."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Ryal, "so they are; for you and I——"

"And children so easily imbibe vulgar habits, that it is really *necessary* to have a lady with them."

"Well," said Mrs. Ryal with a sneer, "ladies are plenty enough. I dare say you will have fifty answers. What salary do you mean to give?"

Mrs. Gresham was a timid but kind-hearted woman; one who desired to do right, but had hardly courage to combat wrong. She was incapable of treating anything unkindly, but she would be guilty of injustice if justice gave her much trouble; she hesitated, because she required a great deal, and intended to give very little.

"*I* cannot give more than five-and-twenty pounds a-year to any one," said Mrs. Hylier, in a decided tone. "My husband says we cannot afford to keep two men-servants and a governess. He wanted me to give the governess seventy, and discharge Thomas; but that was quite impossible: so I have made up my mind. There are only two girls; no boys, like my sister

Gresham's little 'Teddy:' she can spend every evening in the drawing-room when we are by ourselves—have the keys of the piano and library—amuse herself with my embroidery—go to church in the carriage on Sunday—and drive at least once a-week with the children in the Park. There!" added Mrs. Hylier, "I am sure there are hundreds of accomplished women who would jump at such a situation, if they knew of it."

"Washing included?" inquired Mrs. Ryal.

"No. I think she must pay for her own washing, unless there was some great inducement."

"You allow no followers?"

"Oh, certainly not. What can a governess want of friends? Her pupils ought to have all her time."

"God help her!" murmured the old gentleman. The murmur was so indistinct, that the ladies only looked at each other; and then Mrs. Hylier said, "Did you speak, sir?" There was no answer; the conversation was resumed with half a whisper from one lady to another, that perhaps Mr. Byfield was not deaf at all times.

"And what do *you* intend giving, Mrs. Gresham?" questioned Mrs. Ryal.

"I have three girls and a boy," she replied; "and I thought of forty."

"It will be impossible to prevent your governess from talking to mine, and then mine will get discontented; that is not fair, Fanny," observed her sister; "say five-and-thirty, allowing for the difference of number."

"And plenty, I call it," said Mrs. Ryal. "What do they want but clothes? They never lay by for a rainy day. There are hundreds—yes, of well-born and well-bred ladies—who would be glad of such situations."

"I am sorry for it," said the old gentleman, rising and advancing to where the three Kensington wives were seated; "I am very sorry for it."

"Indeed, Mr. Byfield! why, we shall have the better choice."

"Forgive me, ladies, for saying so—but still more am I grieved at that. Permit me to read your advertisement."

Mrs. Gresham coloured; Mrs. Hylier had sufficient command over herself not to appear annoyed; but Mrs. Ryal, the oracle of a clique, the "clever woman," who had, by dint of self-esteem and effrontery, established a reputation for intellectual superiority over those who were either too indolent or too ignorant to question her authority, evinced her displeasure by throwing herself back in her chair, loosening the tie of her bonnet, and dressing her lips in one of those supercilious smiles that would mar the beauty of an angel.

"Wanted, a Governess," read the old gentleman, who frequently interrupted himself to make such observations as the following:—"'Any lady possessing a sound English education'—that in itself is no easy thing to attain—'a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of vocal and instrumental music'—a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of either the one or the other requires the labour of a *man's* life, my good ladies—'and a perfect acquaintance with the French, Italian, and German languages'—how very useless and absurd to found professorships of modern languages in our new colleges, when, in addition to the musical knowledge that would create a composer, a single person, a young female, can be found possessed of a *perfect* acquaintance with French, Italian, and German! Oh, wonderful age!—'also, the rudiments of Greek and Latin—may hear of a highly respectable situation, by applying to Z. P., post-paid, Post-office, Kensington.' Much as you expect in the way of acquirements and accomplishments, ladies," continued the critic, still retaining fast hold of poor Mrs. Gresham's document, "you have not demanded a great deal on the score of religion or morality—neither are mentioned in your list of requisites."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Hylier, "they are taken for granted. No one would think of engaging a governess that was not moral, and all that sort of thing, which are always matters of course."

"To be sure they are," added Mrs. Ryal, in that peremptory tone which seemed to say, Do you dare to question my opinion?—"to be sure they are; and every one knows that nothing can be more determined with respect to religion and morality than

my practice with my children. Rain, hail, or sunshine, well or ill, the governess must be in the house before the clock strikes nine. Psalms read the first thing; and if they have not got well through the French verbs, a chapter besides *for punishment;* catechism, Wednesdays and Fridays; and the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, by heart, every Sunday, after church. I always do two things at once, when I can; and this strengthens their memory, and teaches them religion at the same time. I never questioned my governess as to religion—it looks narrow-minded; and yet *mine* never dreams of objecting to what I desire."

"I should think not," was Mr. Byfield's quiet rejoinder; "strange ideas your children will entertain of the religion that is rendered a punishment instead of a reward."

Mrs. Ryal grasped the tassel of her muff, but made no reply.

"Oh," he continued, "here is the pith in a postscript—'As the lady will be treated as one of the family, a high salary will not be given.' Ladies!" exclaimed the old man, "do you not blush at this? You ask for the fruits of an education that, if it be half what you demand, must have cost the governess the labour of a life, and her friends many hundred pounds. It is your DUTY to treat as one of your family the person who is capable of bestowing upon your children the greatest of earthly blessings; and yet you make the doing so a reason for abridging a stipend, which pays a wretched interest for time and money. Shame, ladies, shame!"

The ladies looked at each other, and at last Mrs. Hylier said, "Really, sir, I do not see it at all in the light in which you put it. I know numberless instances where they are glad to come for less."

Tears came into Mrs. Gresham's eyes, and Mrs. Ryal kicked the ottoman violently.

"The more the pity," continued Mr. Byfield; "but I hold it to be a principle of English honesty to pay for value received, and of English honour not to take advantage of distress."

"Suppose we cannot afford it, sir—am I to do without a governess for my children because my husband cannot pay her sixty or seventy pounds a-year?"

"But you said just now, madam, that Mr. Hylier wished you to pay that sum."

"Yes," stammered the fair economist, "if—if——"

"*If you could manage with one footman*," said the old gentleman, "instead of two. In my young days, my wife, who had but one child, and we were poor, said to me—'Joseph, our girl is growing up without education, and I cannot teach, for I never learned, but we must send her to school.' I answered that we could not afford it. 'Oh, yes, we can,' she said; 'I will discharge our servant; I will curtail our expenses in every way, because I am resolved that she shall be well educated, and honestly paid for.' It never occurred to that right-minded, yet simple-hearted woman to propose lower terms to a governess, but she proposed less indulgence to herself. Thus she rendered justice. She would sooner have worked her fingers to the bone than have bargained for intellect. Ay, Mrs. Ryal, you may laugh; but of all meannesses, the meanest is that which depreciates mind, and having no power but the power that proceeds from a full purse, insults the indigence which often hides more of the immaterial world beneath a russet gown, than your wealth can purchase."

"My wealth!" exclaimed the offended lady; "*your* wealth, if you please; but though *your* wealth, and your oddity, and your altogether, may awe some people, they *can* have no effect upon *me*, Mr. Byfield—none in the world; every one says you are a strange creature."

"My dear Mrs Ryal," said Mrs. Hylier, "you positively must not grow angry with our *dear* friend, Mr. Byfield; he does not mean half what he says."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the eccentric old gentleman; "I mean a great deal more. I only wish I had the means of giving to the world my opinion as to the inestimable value of domestic education for females. I would have every woman educated within the sanctuary of her own home. I would not loosen the smallest fibre of the affection which binds her to her father's house; it should be at once her altar and her *throne*; but as it is a blessing which circumstances prevent many from enjoying, I would command the legislature of this mighty

country to devise some means for the better ordering and investigation of 'ladies' boarding schools.' To set up an establishment for young ladies is very often the last resource for characterless women, and persons who, failing in all else, resort to that as a means of subsistence. Such temporary HOMES should be under the closest superintendence of high-minded and right-thinking gentlewomen. I look upon the blue-boarded and brass-plated schools that swarm in our suburbs," he added, as he turned away to hide an emotion he could not control—"I look upon them as the very charnel-houses of morality."

Mrs. Ryal elevated her eyebrows, and shrugged her shoulders, while the gentle Mrs. Gresham whispered her "not to mind; that Mr. Byfield was half-mad on the subject of schools."

"Ladies," said the old man, apparently recovered from his agitation, and in his usually quiet, calm, yet harshly-toned voice; "ladies, you are, in different degrees, all women of the world; you live with it, and for it, and you are of it, but you are also mothers; and though *your* Ellen, Mrs. Hylier, does grow so fast as almost to overtake her mother's beauty, and you, Mrs. Ryal, stand in open defiance of vulgar contagion, because you fear a rival in a well-bred governess, and get more time out of your daily labourer than you would expect from your milliner for the same money; and you, Mrs. Gresham—but I cannot say to you more than that you all love your children – some more, some less—still according to your natures you *all* love them dearly. So did I mine. My child was all the world to me! I told you what her poor mother did for her improvement—the sacrifice she made. But though we had the longing to secure for her every advantage, we had no skill as to the means of obtaining the knowledge we so desired her to possess. We placed her at a 'first-rate school,' as it was called, and thought we had done our duty; but this going from her home loosened the cords of love that bound her to us. And when a sudden stroke of good fortune converted a poor into a rich man, and we brought our child to a splendid house, we found that our daughter's morals had become corrupted through the means of her companions—an evil the most difficult of all for a

governess to avert—and that she had imbibed moral poison with her mental food." The old gentleman became so agitated, that he could not proceed; and angry as the ladies had been with him a few moments before for a plain-speaking which amounted to rudeness, they could not avoid sympathising with his feelings.

"But we are not going to send our children to a school," suggested Mrs. Gresham.

"I know that, madam," he replied; "but I want to convince you, by comparison, of the blessings that await the power of cultivating both the intellect and the affections under your own roof, and so argue you into the necessity of paying honestly, if not liberally, the woman upon the faithful discharge of whose duties depends the *future* happiness or misery of those dear ones whom you have brought into the world. It is now twenty-two years since I saw that daughter; I shall never see her again in this world; I thought I had strength to tell you the story, painful as it is, but I have not. I would have done so, in the hope that I might have shown you how valuable, past all others, are the services rendered by a worthy and upright woman when entrusted with the education of youth; but when I think of my lost child, I forget everything else. She stands before me as I speak. My blue-eyed lovely one; all innocence and truth—the light, and life, and love of that small four-roomed cottage; and then she loved me truly and dearly; and there again she is—most beautiful, but cankered at the heart, fair, and frail! Lay your children in their graves, and ring the joy-bells over them, rather than intrust them to the whirling pestilence of a large school, or the care of a *cheap* governess!"

"He certainly is mad," whispered Mrs. Ryal to Mrs. Hylier, while the old gentleman, folding his hands one within the other, walked up and down the room, his thoughts evidently far away from the three wives, who were truly, as he had said, "mere women of the world." And yet he was right—they all loved their children, but it was after their own fashion; Mrs. Gresham with the most tenderness—she wished them to be good and happy; Mrs. Hylier's affection was mingled with a strong desire

that they might continue in a state of innocence as long as possible, and not grow too fast. Mrs. Ryal had none of that weakness; she did not care a whit whether she were considered old or young, as long as she was obeyed; so she determined her girls should have as little of what is called heart as possible, that they might be free to accept the best offers when they were made. She was continually contrasting riches and poverty. All the rich were angels, and all the poor thieves; there were no exceptions: those who married according to their parents' wishes, rode in carriages, with two tall footmen behind each; those who married for love, walked a-foot with draggled tails, and died in a workhouse. Of all the women in Kensington, Mr. Byfield disliked Mrs. Ryal the most, and seeing her at Mrs. Hylier's had irritated him more than he cared to confess even to himself. Mrs. Ryal entertained a corresponding animosity towards Mr. Byfield; she had resolved, come what would, to "sit him out;" but she was afraid if she remained much longer, that Miss Stack, the daily governess, whose mother was ill, might go a few minutes before her time was up, and she had more than once caught her shaking the hour-glass—so much for the honesty of one party and the consideration of the other; she knew perfectly well that as soon as she was gone, she would be abused by "the old monster;" for she was conscious that, if he had gone, it would have given her extreme pleasure and satisfaction to abuse him. The old gentleman had not spoken for several minutes, but continued to walk up and down, pausing every now and then to look at her over his spectacles, as if to inquire, "when do you mean to take your departure?" Mrs. Ryal was too exalted to notice this; but after consideration, she rose with much dignity, shook hands with her two "dear friends," dropped a most exaggerated curtsey to Mr. Byfield, who. the moment she was out of the room, threw himself into an easy chair, and drew a lengthened inspiration, which said plainly enough, "Thank heaven, she is gone!"

"And now, ladies," he exclaimed, "finding that *you* want a governess, I want to recommend one—not to you, Mrs. Gresham; notwithstanding 'little Teddy,' she would be too

happy with you. I should like her to live with *you*, Mrs. Hylier."

"With me, sir? Why, after the censure you have passed upon us both, I should hardly think you would recommend us a dog, much less a governess."

"I expect you will treat your governess hardly as well as I treat my dog," was the ungracious reply.

"Really, Mr. Byfield——"

"Pshaw, lady!" interrupted the strange old man; "no words about it. I have not been so long your opposite neighbour without knowing that your last governess did not sit at your table; that when you had the hot, she had the cold; that when a visitor came, she went; that she was treated as a creature belonging to an intermediate state of society, which has never been defined or illustrated—being too high for the kitchen, too low for the parlour; that she was to govern her temper towards those who never governed their tempers towards her; that she was to cultivate intellect, yet sit silent as a fool; that she was to instruct in all accomplishments, which she must know and feel, yet never play any thing in society except quadrilles, *because* she played so well that she might eclipse the young ladies who, not being governesses, play for husbands, while she only plays for bread! My good madam, I know almost every governess who enters Kensington—by sight; the daily ones by their early hours, cotton umbrellas, and the cowed, dejected air with which they raise the knocker, uncertain how to let it fall. Do I not know the musical ones by the worn-out boa doubled round their throats, and the roll of new music clasped in the thinly gloved hand?—and the drawing ones—God help them—by the small portfolio, pallid cheeks, and haggard eyes? I could tell you tales of those hard-labouring classes that would make factory labour seem a toy; but you would not understand me, though you *can* understand that you want a governess, and you can also understand that I, Joseph Byfield, hope you will take one of my recommending."

The sisters looked at each other, as well as to say, "What shall we do?"

Mrs. Hylier assumed a cheerful, careless air, and replied—"Well, sir, who is your governess?"

"WHO she exactly is, Mrs. Hylier, I will not tell you; and she does not know, though she imagines she does; *what* she is I will tell you. She is handsome, without the consciousness of beauty—accomplished, without affectation—gentle, without being inanimate—and I should suppose patient; for she has been a teacher in a school, as well as in what is called a *private* family; but I want to see her patience tested."

"Is she a good musician?"

"Better than most women."

"And a good artist?"

"That was not in the bond; but she does confound perspective, and distort the human body as excellently as most teachers of—the art that can immortalize——"

"My dear sir——"

"Ay, ay; half-a-dozen chalk heads—a few tawdry landscapes, with the lights scratched out, and the shadows rubbed in—a bunch of flowers on velvet, and a bundle of handscreens——"

"My dear sir," interrupted Mrs. Hylier, "these sort of things would not suit my daughters; what they do must be *artistic*."

"Then get an artist to teach them; you go upon the principle of expecting Hertz to paint like Eastlake, and Eastlake to play like Hertz. Madam, she is a well-informed, prudent, intelligent gentlewoman; with feeling and understanding; consequently doing nothing ill, because she will not attempt what she cannot accomplish. She will not undertake to *finish* (that's the term, I think) pupils in either music or drawing, but she will do her best; and as she has resided abroad, I am told (for I hate every language except my own) she is a good linguist; and I will answer for her accepting the five-and-twenty pounds a-year."

"Very desirable, no doubt," muttered Mrs. Hylier, unwilling, for sundry reasons of great import connected with her husband, to displease Mr. Byfield, and yet most unwilling to receive into her family a person whom, judging of others by herself, she imagined must be a spy upon her *menage*.

"*I* knew you would so consider any one I recommended," said

the old gentleman, with a smile that evinced the consciousness of power; "and when shall the '*young person*' (that is the phrase, is it not?)—when shall she come?"

"I think I should like to see her first," answered the lady, nesitating.

"Very good; but to what purpose? You know you will take her."

"Anything to oblige you, my dear sir; but has she no female friend?"

"Some one of you ladies said a few moments ago that a governess had no need of friends."

"You are aware, Mr. Byfield, it is usual upon such occasions to consult the lady the governess resided with last; it *is* usual. I do not want to insist upon it, because I am sure you understand exactly what I require."

"Indeed, madam, I do not pretend to such extensive information; I know, I think, what you *ought* to require, that is all. However, if you wish, you shall have references besides mine," and Mr. Byfield looked harder and stiffer than ever. He walked up to a small water-colour drawing that hung above a little table, and contemplated it, twirling his cane about in a half circle all the time. The subject was ugly enough to look at—a long chimney emitting a column of dense smoke like a steamer, and a slated building stuck on one side, being a view of the "Achilles saw-mills," which Mr. Hylier had lately purchased, a considerable portion of the purchase-money having been advanced by Mr. Byfield.

"No matter how odd, how rude, how incomprehensible our old neighbour is, Caroline," Mr. Hylier had said to his wife only that morning; "no matter what he does, or says, or fancies; if you contradict or annoy him, it will be my ruin."

Her husband's words were forcibly recalled to her by the attitude and look of the old gentleman, and she answered—"Oh, dear no, sir, not at all; one cannot help anxiety on such a subject; and I must only endeavour to make the lady comfortable, and all that sort of thing, although I fear she may complain to you of——"

"No, no, madam," he interrupted; "I do not desire her to be treated in any way better than your former governess; I wish to see how she bears the rubs of life; I *particularly* request that no change whatever be made in her favour; if I wished her to be quiet and comfortable, I should have sent her to my gentle little friend Mrs. Gresham."

Mrs. Hylier bit her lip. "Good morning, ladies; when shall Miss Dawson—her name is Emily Dawson—when shall she come?"

"When you please, sir."

"To-morrow, then, at twelve."

He shut the door; Mrs. Gresham rang the bell; and Mrs. Hylier, in a weak fit of uncontrollable vexation, burst into tears.

"Did you ever know such a savage?" exclaimed Mrs. Gresham.

"I am sure *you* have no reason to complain—if it was not for the hold he has over Hylier——"

"I wonder if she is any relation of his?" said Mrs. Gresham, who was a little given to romance.

"Not she, indeed; he is as proud as Lucifer, and has money enough to enable him to live in a palace."

"Could it be possible that he intends to marry," suggested Mrs. Gresham.

"Marry, indeed! would any man that could prevent it, permit the woman he intended to marry to be a governess? No. I'll trouble my head no more about it; let her come; one is pretty much the same as another. The only thing that really gives me pain is, that Mrs. Ryal should have heard so much of it; she's a regular bell-woman; likes to have the earliest information of whatever goes on in the world, so as to be the first to set it going She was the means of the dismissal of five governesses only last winter, and there is no end to the matches of her breaking. She will declare the girl is—God knows what—if she finds all out."

"Well," said Mrs. Gresham, musingly, "after all, it is very odd; only fancy, Mr. Byfield taking an interest in a governess *at all.* Still, I must insert my advertisement, and I think I

might substitute dancing for Greek; they are about equally useful, and one must not be too unreasonable."

"Very considerate and good of you, Fanny," said her sister; "but believe me, the more you require, the more you will get; and I am not sure that Mrs. Ryal was wrong about the sciences. Every day something fresh starts up that no one ever heard of before, and one must be able to talk about it; it is really very fatiguing to keep up with all the new things, and somehow I do not think the credit one gets by the knowledge is half enough to repay one for the labour."

"Mr. Gresham says the whole system, or, as *he* calls it, *no* system, of female education is wrong."

"My dear Fanny, how absurd you are! What can men possibly know of female education? There is my husband, a worthy man as ever lived, and yet he will tell you that the whole object of female education should be to make women—now only imagine what!"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Why, good wives and mothers."

Both ladies laughed, and then Mrs. Hylier exclaimed, "To think of my taking any one into my house under such circumstances! But at all events, I must prepare the children for their new *governess*."

PART THE SECOND.

EMILY DAWSON had been nearly four months in her situation; during that time Mr. Byfield came and went at Mr. Hylier's, as usual; if he met his *protegée* on the stairs, he turned his head another way; he never asked a question about her, nor seemed to take the least interest in her proceedings; once or twice Mrs. Hylier (who was proud of her diplomacy) said something leading to the subject, but Mr. Byfield silenced her in a way peculiarly his own.

"Why does Mr. Byfield turn away from you, Miss Dawson?" inquired little Elizabeth Hylier: (children are acute observers:) "he used to stop us on the stairs, and call us juvenile jades·

now he looks so—and goes on. Are you a naughty girl, Miss Dawson?"

"I hope not, Elizabeth," said the governess.

"I am sure not," added Caroline, the elder of the two; "I don't think you ever were naughty. When you were a little girl, you were always too steady—too serious—and"——The young lady paused, and looked earnestly in the face of her governess;——

"Well, my dear, go on," said Miss Dawson, in a gentle voice.

"I would rather not say what I intended, for fear you would not like it," answered the girl; "and yet I should wish to say it."

"Then do, Caroline."

"I meant, too sad to be naughty, or like other girls."

"I was not always sad, my dear; though, I perceive, I must not let you see that I am so now, even at times. If you say your lessons well, and are as attentive as you have been this morning, I shall be much happier." Caroline Hylier flung her arms round Miss Dawson's neck and kissed her, declaring she would do her best to improve; and while she was speaking, Mrs. Hylier entered the school-room; a cloud of the deepest displeasure overshadowed her pretty face.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Elizabeth, "Miss Dawson says that if we are good, she will be so much happier."

"I should have thought," observed the jealous mother, "that *my* being happier is of more consequence; is it not, Miss Dawson?"

"Certainly, madam," she replied.

"I *do* wish, Miss Dawson, you would not answer me in that peculiarly sad voice; and that everlasting mourning you wear—it makes me heart-broken to look at it."

"It nearly broke my heart," said the poor girl, "to put it on."

"Well, there is no occasion to be sharp about it. I thought when you received your first quarter's salary, you would have changed it. Caroline, take your hand out of Miss Dawson's; I

hate to see that sort of familiarity. Since you have both been so good, suppose you come and drive with me in the park."

"Oh, thank you, dear mamma!" exclaimed both the children, in a delighted tone of voice; rejoiced to see her temper changed.

"Thank you, that will be a treat; and, mamma," added Caroline, "may Miss Dawson come also?"

"Miss Dawson has had her drive this week already," said Mrs. Hylier, walking out of the room with renewed ill temper.

"Let Elizabeth go, and I will stay with you," whispered the affectionate, though spoiled, child, to Miss Dawson.

"No, indeed," she replied, "no, indeed; it was very kind of your mamma to ask you, and you will offend her if you do not go. I have a letter to write, and that will employ me until you return."

"Ah, you say that to make us go!" said Elizabeth.

"For shame, Lizzy! you know we never found Miss Dawson out in the very least little white fib in the world," observed Caroline.

"But that would not be a fib, would it, sister?—because mamma often says those kind of things to papa, to get him to do what she wants."

"You are too young, my dear Lizzy, to be able to judge of any one's motives," said Miss Dawson; "and in this instance may be mistaken. So now, dears, go, and do not keep mamma waiting."

Some person, who had seen Miss Dawson by chance at Mrs. Hylier's, although she was "only a governess," had been heard to observe that she was very pretty. Had she not been a governess, she could not have been looked at without being admired—not for actual beauty, but for the sweet gentleness of her countenance, the purity of her complexion, the open, truthful outlooking of her fine eyes, and the ease and grace of her movements. The deep mourning, which had excited Mrs. Hylier's displeasure, made her an object of touching interest to all who had any feeling; it harmonised with the sad expression of her face; and two or three ladies, in open defiance of Mrs.

Hylier's well-known jealousy of disposition, had said "how glad they should be if Miss Dawson would visit *their* young people" —invitations which she thankfully declined. When she was left alone—a luxury which her class so seldom enjoy—she opened her desk, and, after glancing over some letters, fixed her eyes upon a miniature she had taken from a secret drawer. She looked at it long and steadily, until her eyes overflowed, and tear after tear, large round drops, coursed each other down her anguished face; then, wiping the moisture from its surface, she looked again at the picture, pressed it convulsively within her clasped palms, and laying her head upon them, sobbed as if her heart was breaking. While sobbing, she slid from her seat upon her knees; her emotion gradually subsided. She prayed, rose, kissed the cherished picture, and murmuring, as she closed the case, "Mother—*my* mother!" replaced it in her desk. Strange as it may seem, after this agitation she became at once composed —it had done her good; the petty insults which, cherished child as she had been for so many years, she felt it hard to endure, had passed away with the deluge of tears that welled up from her young heart. She wondered how they could have grieved her—how she could have felt them—when the superior bitterness of her mother's loss came again upon her. Small sorrows place us below the world—a great sorrow above it; and she continued a letter, written at intervals, with a quieter and firmer mind than she had experienced for some days. The letter was to a young lady, the sister of the curate who had attended her mother's death-bed: a portion of it ran thus:—

"You ask me if I am happy: I ought to be happier than I am. My two pupils are kind, affectionate girls; and though somewhat idle, and very ignorant, if I am permitted to manage them as I desire, I have no doubt they will improve—not rapidly, but certainly. I never could manage a child until I had obtained its affections—and the affections of the young are generally ductile; but Mrs. Hylier is weak enough to be jealous of the little love the children bear me. She does not understand that it is the only means I have of working out her, or what ought to be her, intentions. But the truth is, that all she really

desires them to know are a few showy accomplishments. She came home in an ecstasy of delight the other evening with a girl who had repeated some long Italian poem—of which she could not even remember the name, much less understand the meaning—in a room crowded with company. 'The girl,' she said, 'had so much self-possession, and her action was so graceful.' With the same breath she declaimed against a woman's appearing on the stage. I ventured to observe, that the child who, at twelve years of age, could have sufficient confidence to *repeat* and *act* a poem in a crowded drawing-room, would be very likely to desire to exhibit before a larger audience as she grew older; but she could not perceive the analogy, and thought, indeed *said*, I was impertinent for making it. Is it not a cause of great regret that I have never yet found a mother who would act in concert with me? I submit quietly to be treated with indifference by the lady and gentleman, who, when I am in the room, speak and act exactly as if they were alone, except when secrets are to be communicated, then they begin to whisper, and then, of course, I leave the apartment. I find, when with my pupils, a deep, and, happily, an absorbing interest, in their improvement; but, when that excitement is over, I droop again; for I am considered an intruder when lessons are over, and an automaton while they are in progress. Shall I ever again hear the voice of encouragement, which makes the heart bound to its duties—*shall I ever be praised any more?* Oh, do not think, because I say this, that I yearn after flattery; I do not; but if the parent knew how kind considerate words increase the desire to bring the children forward—a smile—a gentle word—a simple 'you have done well,' would make the labour, the weary labour, of thankless teaching a pleasure. Mrs. Hylier seldom finds fault; but she never utters a sound of commendation. And yet why do I complain? You know that, for three years before my mother was taken from me, I toiled through the streets of that distant town, in the grey mists of the winter mornings, as well as in the light of the summer sun, teaching music here and drawing there—all the 'accomplishments' in one place, and 'the sciences' in another; and, as I had no protector—a creature to

be insulted by those whose manly garb was certainly no index to a manly mind; I was dismissed from one house because the lady thought me too pretty to come in the way of her son; from another, because I did not wear caps, and looked too young without them; from another, because I would not lunch with the lady's maid; and yet I bore all this, and more, as you know, cheerfully, because from six in the evening until eight the next morning, I had the sheltering bosom of my mother. The abilities she had fostered were the means of supporting her at the last. In those two small cottage rooms *I had a home;* there were *her* smile, *her* voice, *her* counsel, and *her* prayer. I was some one's first object. She loved me; the tenderness of her whole life was poured into my heart, under every trial which a fatherless girl must endure, who has to grope her way through the world's darkness. Oh, my mother! my mother!—tears will blot the page when I write of her! When I think of her, I feel suffocated; and I have no right to repine; only thus much—even a little kindness would make me work cheerfully. With the education, and tastes, and feelings of a gentlewoman, it is hard to be treated as if I had neither education, nor taste, nor feeling. The lady's maid is a confidant; the housekeeper a mistress; the housemaid has half the day to herself; the governess——But this is idle; my mother would reprove me for it; she would tell me to do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me, and leave the rest to Him. You know how she was deserted by her father in consequence of her marriage; and, according to her desire, her death was mentioned exactly as she wished. She thought that if her father saw it, he would seek out his grandchild. Perhaps he is dead!—at least, no notice has been taken of me; and if it had not been for the chance which threw me in the way of that strange old man, Mr. Byfield, I might have been left upon the world without any occupation. He is certainly a very odd old man; he evinced a great degree of interest in me at first, but since he placed me here, he has never spoken to me but once. I had been walking the other morning in the park for more than two hours with the children, and being tired, sat down upon one

of the benches, while the children walked up and down with their cousin, as their mother wishes, and under the care of Mrs. Gresham's French governess; he came so suddenly, that he quite took me by surprise. 'Are you growing lazy?' he inquired. I answered, 'No; but that I was not very well.' 'And have you not found out,' he continued, 'that a governess has no right to be ill?' I answered, 'I knew that; and so was ill but seldom.' 'Do you jest with me?' he said, sternly. 'No, sir,' I replied; 'I speak the truth. If I were independent, I would yield most likely to a pain in my side, or, when my cough keeps me awake all night, send for a doctor; the world believes in the sickness that is heard of, rather than the sickness that must be examined into—no one sees my illness, so I am ill but seldom.' And then he looked so penetratingly into my face, and asked me how I had learned to reason? and I had it on my lip to answer, that I had learned to reason by endeavouring to cease to feel, but thought the reply would seem pert from youth to age, so smiled, and held my peace; and when I smiled, he sighed so bitterly, and walked away, and then looked back, and returned and sat down by my side; then gazing in my face, he asked me if I had ever told a lie. And I said truly, in the sight of God, I believed I never had since I knew wrong from right. And then he answered, that I looked like truth, as all women did when they lied most. It was unwise, I know; but I had done nothing to deserve such an insult, and I told him so, without further parley, but as gently as I could, thanking him for the kindness he had shown to one who had no friend but God. Will you believe that he seemed no more moved by what I uttered than if I had been dumb; only when I had finished speaking, I could not repress the tears that would come—poor cowardly tears—I hate them so—those waters of a troubled heart; and then, shaking his head, he said — But I hear the voice of Mrs. Gresham's French governess, so must say adieu for the present. If constant occupation did not increase my weakness, I dare say my spirits would revive; for I have a better lot than many. There is a poor teacher at Mrs. Stonewell's school, and Ma'amselle Mercier tells me she has but fifteen pounds a-year,

and remains at school all the vacations, to mend up the house linen. Adieu."

"Ah! there you are!" exclaimed the light breezy voice of Mademoiselle Mercier, as she ran up and kissed Emily Dawson on both cheeks. "Ah! ma mie, vy you not go a valk in the Parks? Ah! you English ladies are given to the mopes; and ven you have five moments to yourself, instead of enjoy all, you make sorrow more sorrowful by thinking over him! Toujours gai! I have seen my maman this morning—she come from Paris to be Bonne in Lady Craig's family, after educating Lady Craig. She has brought me such a charming parasol; she loves me so moche, my dear mothere; Ah! my dear, I beg your pardon, I forget; I did not mean to call your tears, chere Emily. I am a thoughtless girl; and my mothere make me full of joy. Now, do not cry; bah!—there! I tell you, if you dry up your nice blue English eyes, I vill go and fetch my new parasol, and ve vill valk togethere in Kensington Garden for half hour. Madame Hylier, she say to Madame Gresham, they go three hour drive, and they are not gone two hours yet——Do come——Madame Gresham likes me to be vith you, you are so steady. All the company is in the garden by this—and ve see such nice ladie and gentleman, almost like Longchamps."

Miss Dawson begged to be excused; she would rather stay at home; she had much to do; was not well; and urged a thousand reasons, but without effect. "As you please, my dear," said the now pouting French girl; "but it is unkind of vou; Madame Gresham vill not let me go vith any other lady, and I nevere get a valk. Dat cher littel boy is such a plague ven ve go out—and he is avay. Now do come; it is cruel of you for fancy to prevent me!" Emily did not continue to refuse, for she could not bear to be unkind; and drawing a thick crape veil over her face, she prepared to accompany the volatile but kind-hearted Frenchwoman. They were a national contrast, those two girls;—the staid, quiet, graceful deportment of Emily Dawson, and the vivid, tripping, carefully careless *demarche* of Colette Mercier—the deep mourning of the English girl, and the tulip-like garb of the French, in whose dress, though there

were divers colours, there was perfect harmony. "You look pale and tired already, ma mie," she said to Emily; "and we must not sit down in the gardens, I am told. But it would be most pleasant, those charming, lovely ladies, and handsome gentlemen, if they only vould look happy; but they do not—they look solemn, and valk dead marche in Saul; and yet, though I am but poor governess, I am happier than they. There now is an English governess vith her pupils—how sad she look, poor girl! I vill tell you, Emily, vat my mothere tell me ven first I came to Englan', 'Ma chere,' she say to me in confidance, 'do your duty as moche as you can, *vithout killing yourself.* Some families will be very kind and goot to you; and out of seven that I taught in myself, one is good to me now, that is Lady Craig; but the rest forgot the cares and teachings. If you meet gratitude—which all who teach deserve from all who learn—turn up your eyes and bless God, but *do not expect it.* I know what young teachers think ven pains have been taken vith them, as I take vith you; they go to situation full of the importance of their *duties.* Bah! till motheres treat governesses like gentlewomen, and feel that the very best part of what an honest teacher gives her pupils—the thoughts of her head and the feelings of her heart—cannot be paid for, though the mere machinery of teaching may be remunerated—there can be no reciprocity between them."

This Colette uttered rapidly, with her strong and peculiar accent, for her French had a flavouring of *patois,* of which even her English partook; and she laughed lightly when her speech was ended. "That," answered Miss Dawson, "is an easy theory, but a bad practice. No matter how you are treated, your duty remains the same; it cannot be performed with the same pleasure, but *it is the same!*"

"Vell, my dear, so let it be; torment the flesh off your bones—plague yourself to death—fag, fag—and see! At the last you vill have no more thanks for *your* heavy toil than I shall have for my light labour. Bah! half the people do not know the difference between a good and a bad governess. My mothere, she say, how should they until they are better educated them-

selves? Now, there, you act what you call conscientiously; you are thin, like a poor rush, and sigh when alone. I take it lightly; I do not trouble myself; I am fat, and laugh to myself. If you wear yourself to the bone, what do you satisfy?"

"My own conscience," replied Emily.

"Ah! vell, if you go on satisfying your sort of conscience, you vill soon have a bell ring over your grave," replied the French girl. "Ah!" she added, looking under her companion's bonnet—for they had been walking rather rapidly, and Emily was obliged to throw up her veil for air—"you smile at that; it is not smiling matter to die and be put in the cold ground ven one is young, and the earth one great garden."

Emily made no reply. "After all," resumed Colette, "I do not see so pretty parasol as mine vith any lady."

"It is very pretty, certainly," said Miss Dawson; "but I think it quite time to return home." She was urged to this remark by the stare of a couple of gentlemen, who, certainly not unobserved by Colette, had followed them for the last few minutes, and, despite their rapid footsteps, managed to escort them, as soldiers do their prisoners, to their door—Emily maintaining a dignified silence, and Colette divided between her national love for adventure and a certain womanly disdain of insulting impertinence, which together—one feeling acting one moment and another the next—prompted her to give vent to one or two clever sarcasms, which provoked and amused their tormentors.

Mrs. Hylier and Mrs. Gresham were at the breakfast-room door as they entered, and had been evidently watching their return.

"I did not know you were going out, Miss Dawson," said Mrs. Hylier, sternly.

"As the young ladies were with you, I thought I might accompany Ma'amselle," she answered.

"I do not approve of my governess walking with gentlemen," continued the lady, apparently unconscious that Miss Dawson had replied.

"Vot gentlemens?" exclaimed Miss Mercier, with an air of pretty astonishment.

"You know best, miss; but as you are not in my employment, I have nothing to say to you; I can only desire *my governess* not to do it again," persisted Mrs. Hylier. "And I should like to know who the gentlemen were."

"And so should I, indeed, ma'am," said Miss Dawson, "most earnestly, though it would be to little purpose—for who would avenge an insult offered to me?"

"Oh! you should tell your patron saint, Mr. Byfield," returned the lady, with an insulting laugh and a sneer, as she entered the breakfast-room with Mrs. Gresham, slapping the door in the face of the two girls.

While Colette muttered to herself in French, Miss Dawson turned slowly round to go up-stairs, and saw the housemaid draw back her head from over the baniste.s, while the footman did not think it necessary to conceal that he had heard the "blowing up," as he elegantly termed it, which his mistress gave "our governess."

Mrs. Hylier threw herself into a chair, and, looking at Mrs. Gresham, exclaimed, "Well, and what do you mean to do?"

"Why, nothing, sister; surely the poor girls cannot help it if impertinent men will follow them home."

"I know the French girl you have is good for nothing, and you have suffered her to encroach too much."

"I really cannot tell, sister," said the tranquil Mrs. Gresham; "I had an excellent character with her, and though Mrs. Ryal did say her accent is bad, I don't think she is a good judge; and one may go on changing for ever, just as she does. Since that underbred daily governess of hers ran off with her own father's shopman, she has tried half-a-dozen; but, as Mr. Gresham says, she gives her servants better wages than her teachers, and what can she expect?"

Again the ladies were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Ryal, just as they had been when about to advertise.

"I feel it *my* duty, Mrs. Hylier," she commenced,—after the usual nothings of the morning visit had been exchanged,—"I feel it a positive duty to tell you that all the people of Kensington are talking about you."

"I am glad they are so well employed," retorted Mrs. Hylier, with a provoking smile.

"Then you are easily satisfied, my dear; but rather, I should have said, they are talking about your governess, and your amazing gullibility. Indeed, they are hinting that Mr. Hylier must have some particular reason for suffering such an inmate. Why—do—you—know—*who*—you—have—got—in—your—house?" These last words were pronounced with peculiar emphasis, and divided exactly as they are printed, the lady advancing her face close to that of Mrs. Hylier, and opening her eyelids so as to make her round eyes seem half as large again as they really were.

"Ye—s," stammered Mrs. Hylier; "a go—verness."

"A—nonsense, my dear; she is not a bit better than she should be."

"Few of us are," said the meek Mrs. Gresham, who, somehow or other—perhaps through the influence of a sensible husband, whom she was fortunate enough to love very much—was beginning to think occasionally, and to compare—the best result of thought.

Mrs. Ryal looked daggers at her for a moment, and then continued, "That old Byfield is a wretch."

"I always thought so," answered Mrs. Hylier, not willing to be outdone in suspicion: "I always thought she was his daughter."

"His daughter! that would be milk-white innocence to the fact—she is much worse."

"Impossible!" said Mrs. Gresham.

"He could not be so bad as that," observed Mrs. Hylier.

"All men are bad," pronounced the decided Mrs. Ryal; "all men are bad, as I tell my husband; but some are worse than others."

"You are mistaken—misinformed, I should have said," quoth the perplexed Mrs. Hylier; "he has never taken the smallest notice of her since she has been here—never asked why she was not in the drawing-room. I even, one day, thinking to put him in good humour, showed him a tulip she had worked in that everlasting tapestry of mine."

"Well, and what did he say?"

"Why, he called it—rubbish."

"Sheer art," said Mrs. Ryal.

"I cannot believe he would put a person of bad character over my children," urged Mrs. Hylier.

"Stuff!" exclaimed Mrs. Ryal.

"And the object?"

"Ah! that rests in the secret recesses of the man's own wicked heart," said Mrs. Ryal, with due emphasis; and then added, "To get at their motives is hard for us poor women; but the only way to get even at their acts, is by putting that and that together." This was said with an air of peculiar sagacity. "Now, let Mrs. Gresham ask her popinjay of a governess, if, the other day in the park, Miss Dawson did not complain of being tired (now only fancy a governess, whose duty it is, *her positive duty*, to walk as long with her pupils as it is necessary they should walk—only fancy her being tired!—ah! ah! there is a *ruse* in the very excuse), if she did not sit down on a seat, and if Mr. Byfield, who seems so strange and unconcerned about her here, did not come up, and not only sit down by her side, but take her hand; and then she sulked, and he went away, and came back again, and kept her hand in his, and there they sat like two lovers, in Hyde Park. It is really scandalous to repeat, and makes my cheeks all over in a glow. And to-day, my Mary was in Kensington Gardens—Mary, my own maid—and she saw your two governesses, ladies. flirting and philandering about; and then, who should she also observe, watching the English girl's every movement, but old Byfield. Well, two dandified gentlemen came up, attracted, Mary says, by the lightness of their manner, and followed them home; but not unobserved; for the old gentleman, his face purple with jealousy"——

"Or the March wind," suggested Mrs. Gresham.

"Kept at the other side of the way," continued Mrs. Ryal, with a look of contempt at Mrs. Gresham. "But that is not all. This morning I sent Mary with a letter to the post, and she overtook Mr. Byfield's man, who was talking at the corner of Salter's to one of the butchers. 'Are you going to the post-

office?' he said. 'Then will you put my master's letter in for me?' And so she took the letter—she is very obliging—and who should it be directed to but Miss Dawson!" Mrs. Hylier rang the bell, and inquired of the servant if the governess had received a letter. The man said the three o'clock post had brought her one while she was out; that he believed it had not yet been taken to the school-room; as it was not in his department, could not exactly tell—would inquire—went down, and returned with the letter: it had been left on the kitchen dresser. The lady found no fault with the servant's unpardonable inattention; and when he had left the room, the three ladies declared it certainly was Mr. Byfield's handwriting.

"Will you break the seal?" inquired Mrs. Ryal, eyeing the letter longingly.

"Certainly not," answered Mrs. Hylier.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Ryal, with a sigh, "Mary says true enough, secrets *are* secrets since the packet envelopes came in; then have her down, and see how she will look when *she* opens it." Mrs. Hylier's hand was on the bell, when Mrs. Gresham interposed.

"Sister," she said, "it occurs to me that we may all be in error; and if so, how will you forgive yourself for wounding the feelings of a poor girl?"

"Feelings, indeed!" sneered Mrs. Ryal; "why, I vow she has bewitched you as well as the men; can any thing be more evident?—at least, if she is innocent, give her an opportunity of clearing herself."

The bell was rung; and the governess, still smarting under the lash of the previous insult, was sent for.

The servant returned with an apology—would Mrs. Hylier be so good as to excuse her for a few moments; the servant added, that Miss Dawson was crying.

"How I have sustained my spirits since she came into the house is extraordinary," observed Mrs. Hylier, smelling her vinaigrette; "she is always sad."

"She has good reasons, you may depend on it," said Mrs. Ryal, significantly.

"I think so too," added Mrs. Gresham, quietly.

"Really, sister," said Mrs. Hylier, "to hear you talk of late, one would think I was a savage. I am sure it is quite enough to be plagued with great growing-up daughters, without those governesses; and if I mention school, Mr. Hylier begins about morals. I wish you had had Miss Dawson with all my heart."

"My French girl does pretty well; but Mr. Gresham says she acts from habit, not principle: and that—but hush"——Emily Dawson entered the room, while the traces of tears were yet fresh upon her fair young face; the earnest desire she had ever felt to perform her duty in the highest and most important vocation which a woman can be called upon to fulfil, had not only given an elevation to her countenance and manner, but an expression to her features which never accompanies a small or sordid mind; and whatever Mrs. Hylier chose to say when she was not present, the superiority of mind was so manifest in the manner of the young governess, that, despite the presence of Mrs. Ryal, she desired her to be seated, in a tone which signified a request. Then came the question, Had she met Mr. Byfield in the Park—sat and conversed with him? To this she frankly answered, "Yes," and seemed perfectly unconscious of the occasion of the smile and sneer that passed between Mrs. Hylier and Mrs. Ryal. She professed herself quite unable to account either for the countenance Mr. Byfield had shown her at first, or his subsequent change of conduct. "He had," she said, "apparently befriended her for the very reason which made the world shun her—because she was friendless and poor." Then Mrs. Hylier placed the letter in her hand; with what Mrs. Ryal afterwards termed "unpardonable effrontery," she opened it, and as she read, her countenance became radiant with pleasure.

"Well!" exclaimed the two ladies, actuated by the same impulse; "well, have you any objection to our seeing that letter?"

"I cannot show it to Mrs. Hylier," she replied, with perfect frankness, "because Mr. Byfield desires me not to do so."

"Was ever such hardened impudence!" muttered Mrs. Ryal.

"It is very kind—very—I am sure," continued Emily, re-perusing the letter, and too much absorbed with and delighted

by its contents to hear the remark Mrs. Ryal made. "It is too too much!"

"What is?" said Mrs. Gresham.

"To take a lodging for me at Hampstead, where I am to remain for a few months, until I get stronger and better—and all at his own expense. I remember when I would have been too proud to accept such a favour, thinking I could earn all I required; but of late I have been so weak—so"—She looked from the gentle face of Mrs. Gresham to the other ladies, and, astonished at the expression of displeasure and scorn of their countenances, paused, and did not utter another word.

"I think, then, the sooner you leave my house the better," said Mrs. Hylier; "the sooner the better. Oh, what will Mr. Hylier say?"

"What have I done?" exclaimed Miss Dawson.

"Oh, what a world it is—to see such a face as that masking so much vice!" ejaculated Mrs. Ryal.

"Are you aware what will be said if you place yourself under Mr. Byfield's protection in this way?" inquired Mrs. Gresham, still kindly.

"Let her go, by all means—there, you may go—and the sooner out of the house the better! Oh! to think of my having such a person as this to take care of my innocent children!" and Mrs. Hylier, overpowered by a sudden fit of maternal love, fell into strong hysterics.

Emily walked up-stairs, the open letter in her hand, Miss Mercier was still in the school-room.

"Ma'amselle," said Miss Dawson, "Mr. Byfield has written to me that, knowing I am overworked and ill, he has taken for me a country lodging for a few months. You know who he is, and all about him?"

"And surely you are not going to accept that!" replied the French girl; "if you do, you lose character at once. No one evere do such a naughty thing as that; he must be bad man. Do, pray, send it back; young men sometimes make love for love, but old men always for vickedness; bah!"

Of all the difficult things in the world, it is the most difficult

for people of the world to comprehend the selfishness of the good.

"I don't know how it is," persisted Ma'amselle; "you are in life nearly as long as I am, and yet you don't know half so moche. Depend upon it, the old man is a bad man. If you go into the lodging he take, you nevere come out with good chamctere. Take my advice—I know more than you."

"Good-bye, Ma'amsell," said Emily; "thank you for your frankness. God bless you; leave me to myself to think a little."

When Emily was alone, she read the letter over again. The unaccountable interest Mr. Byfield had taken in her as a stranger, did not seem so singular as the carelessness he had evinced towards her for so long a time. Emily Dawson's own pure mind could hardly conceive the possibility of what she had heard from Mrs. Hylier and Mrs. Ryal; but she had often been astonished at the acuteness of the Frenchwoman's perceptions. Could such baseness be possible? Her whole nature seemed changed in a moment; she trembled convulsively, fearing she knew not what; and, from suspecting nothing, she suspected everything. Why should Mr. Byfield forbid her showing his letter to Mrs. Hylier?—why? But her brain whirled—she could not think. The housemaid entered the room; she was a kind girl, and in tears.

"Please, miss, my mistress says you're to go to-night," she said.

"Where?" inquired the governess, in a tone of such utter helplessness that it touched the poor thing to the heart.

"I am sure I don't know, miss. She said you could be at no loss for a home; and here's the month's salary and month's warning money."

"Not to Mr. Byfield," she thought; "I must not go there; they all say that; and yet this woman turns me out to the very vice she would have me shun. God help me—I am quite, quite alone!"

"Master will be in a fine way, *that I* know, when he comes home," continued the girl, good-naturedly busying herself packing up Miss Dawson's wardrobe. "I am sure I hope you ain't going

to Mr. Byfield's; though I'm sure there's no harm, yet I hope you are not, miss. If you wouldn't be above it, my mother has a little pretty house at Chelsea, and you might be there till you could turn yourself about—safe, as one may say; and if so be you wish it, I'd be on my honour and my oath not to tell—not the old gentleman, nor any one else."

"Anywhere, Mary—anywhere," said the governess, listlessly; "anywhere, away from all I have known in this house"

Elizabeth, the youngest of her pupils, rushed into the room, and flinging her arms round her neck, sobbed—"You shall not go, dear Miss Dawson—you *shall* not go. Mamma said I was not to come near you, you were so wicked; but I said I would."

"Your mamma mistakes," answered the governess, not even in the anguish of that hour forgetting how necessary it is to make the parent appear right always, at least in intention, in the eyes of the child. "She mistakes, dearest Elizabeth; she will not always think so; but you must not cling round me. God bless you, my dear child; you did wrong to come when mamma said you were not to do so. God bless you—be good, be truthful, and obedient; God bless you!" and with a gentle force she obliged the weeping child to leave the room.

A short time completed her preparations, or rather the preparations which Mary made for her. It is pleasant and cheering to note the kindness which the poor often bestow upon those who are in trouble. The evidence of the existence of this benevolent feeling is far more frequent than people imagine. It does not descend in showers of coin, but in words of kindness; and is as pure as the dew which an all-wise nature distils into the cups of drooping flowers.

"Let me tie your bonnet, miss, and pin your shawl. Lawk, how *numb* your hands are! Then, you'll go to my mother's, I think you said, miss, and no one shall know; she'll treat you as it becomes *her like* to treat a lady, rich or poor. The cab is ready. Now, keep a heart: God is above us all. I'll open the door myself," she continued; "and the trunk is in; and keep up, miss—lies are found out sooner or later. Why," she ex-

claimed, seeing that Emily paused opposite the drawing-room, "surely you are not going to be more insulted? You might as well talk to a stone wall as to my missus."

Emily nevertheless entered the apartment, where Mrs. Hylier was alone, pondering, in no pleasant mood, over the occurrences of the past hours—thinking how she had acted in decided opposition to her husband's desire, who willed it that Mr. Byfield was never to be contradicted, at least in his house; and though she was half-convinced of Emily's unworthiness, she knew how hard it would be to convince him. The pale girl walked silently up to where Mrs. Hylier was seated. "I come," she said, "to bid you remember what I say—that you will (heartless as you are) repent the injustice and insult you have heaped upon the head of a houseless, homeless orphan. You have done me cruel wrong by your suspicion, and you send me forth to make the suspicion real; but God, who is above all, will save me yet!"

She spoke these few words in the tone of a breaking heart, and without further word quitted the house. During the short time of her residence there, she had conferred more lasting service upon Mrs. Hylier's children than they had ever received before—she had sown healthful and truthful seed. Not content with teaching by lessons, she had hallowed every tree, and leaf, and blade of grass, with a history. A new existence had dawned upon their minds: they understood *why* their hoop rolled, and *why* it came to the ground; they understood why morning followed night, and why the heat was at noon the most intense. They had learned more *orally* than they had ever learned from books. Poor Emily knew this; and as her arm encircled her trunk, and her hot fevered breath hung upon the closed windows of the rattling cabriolet, that was taking her she knew not where, the words of the French teacher rang in her ears—"Torment the flesh off your bones—plague yourself to death—fag, fag—and see! At the last, you will have no more thanks for your heavy toil than I shall for my light labour." "Still," she murmured, "I have done my duty."

"Please, ma'am," said the man to an elderly woman who opened the door of a small house in a low suburb, "here's a

lady, like, your daughter in Kensington has sent you, as a lodger; and you are to be particular kind to her, and she'll try and run down to-morrow night, between lights. The fare is paid, miss—the young woman paid it. She said she knew you hadn't changed your cheque."

Mary's mother did not look as good-natured as Mary herself. But Emily was so bowed down as hardly to observe the difference.

"Well," said the woman to her youngest daughter—"well, I never saw any one so careless about accommodation. Why, she said the back would do as well as the front room, though I told her she might have either at the same rent; and if I had not undressed her, she'd have either sat up all night, or laid down in her clothes. She's more like a dead than a living woman."

PART THE THIRD.

THE next morning the pat, pat, pat, of Mr. Byfield's cane was heard ascending the steps leading to Mr. Hylier's hall door; his knock had the determined sound of "I will come in." "Remember, James," said his mistress, "popping" her head out of the breakfast-room, "I am not at home—I shall not be at home all day—I am out for a week—went down to meet your master last night." James bowed, and the lady disappeared.

"My mistress is not at home, sir," observed the sapient footman. Mr. Byfield poked him aside with his cane, and having entered the hall, said, "I want to speak to Miss Dawson."

"Miss Dawson, sir, left the house last night."

"Left last night! Then where is she gone?"

"Really can't say, sir; she's left for good, trunk and all."

"Left—gone! but surely you must know where she drove to?"

"The housemaid saw her off, sir."

Mr. Byfield commanded Mary to appear; but she having always lived "in the best families," lied with superior firmness. "The very words Miss Dawson said, sir, were, 'Tell the cab to drive to Oxford Street, and then I will direct him the number;' these were her last words, sir, and I can tell no more." Mary was in haste—not agitated by the untruth—so she stayed no farther question, but dived down the kitchen stairs.

"Now," said the old gentleman, "I *must* see your mistress."

"Not at home, sir," repeated James.

"When will she be at home?"

"Not for a week. She's gone down to where master's stopping."

"That's the third falsehood you have told since I came into this hall, young man," observed Mr. Byfield. "Your mistress cannot have gone down to where your master is, because business obliged your master to come to my house this morning, even before he visited his own;" and Mr. Byfield turned and entered the breakfast-room so suddenly as almost to knock down the fair mistress of the mansion, who certainly was as close to the door as if she had been about to open it for her unwelcome intruder.

"Good morning, madam!" he said, with the exceeding courtesy of an angry man, before the storm that has gathered, breaks. "Good morning. Will you have the kindness to tell me *where* Miss Dawson is gone, and *why* she is gone?"

Mrs. Hylier suffered Mr. Byfield to repeat his question before she answered; she was debating within herself whether she should assume a tone of indignant and outraged propriety, or that of gentle upbraiding; her temper triumphed, and she lost sight of her husband's interests and her husband's wishes. In loud and unqualified terms she upbraided Mr. Byfield with what she termed his sinful duplicity, in forcing a person, whom she called

by no gentle name, into her house; exhausted a dictionary of epithets upon Miss Dawson—talked wildly and at random of depravity—and wound up all by a movement something between an hysteric and a faint. Mr. Byfield sat—his great grey eyes dilating and contracting, like those of a cat in the sunshine, according as his passions were moved; and notwithstanding his age, such was their fire, that they would have scorched the noisy fragile thing—who had sunk into her luxurious chair, a trembling heap of mull-muslin and English blonde—if she had had the moral courage once to look him fairly and bravely in the face. There sat Mr. Byfield, white and motionless—so white, that the flakes of his snowy hair could hardly be distinguished from his cheek; his eyes flashing, as I have said, his long bony fingers grasping either knee, and grasping it so tightly, that the dark veins stood out like purple ridges on his hands.

"Ring the bell!" she said, at last perceiving that he took no more notice of her sobs than he had done of her words: "Ring the bell!" He neither spoke nor moved; and at last the lady essayed to do it herself. He seized her arm—and Lord Lindsay's mailed glove did not press more deeply into the soft arm of Mary of Scotland, than did the old man's animated bones into the wrist of Mrs. Hylier. She screamed with spleen and pain, but resumed her seat. And there he continued to sit opposite to her, without trusting himself to speak, yet, by his presence, effectually preventing her moving. Suddenly Mr. Hylier's well-known knock resounded through the house. There was a rush of light young feet—the echoes of the beatings of anxious hearts—and exclamations of "Oh, papa!"—"Dear papa!" and a whisper or two, and then Mr. Hylier came in, just in time to catch his wife, in another faint, upon his arm. Questions followed; and the two young ladies were turned out of the room; while Mrs. Hylier sobbed and moaned, and called herself an ill-used woman. At last the old man, gathering up his energies, spoke. He stated fairly and plainly, in agitated tones, that he had placed Miss Dawson with Mrs. Hylier, because he wished to observe how she would bear the ill and careless manner in which he knew she would be treated. It was (he said) of para-

mount importance to him, that he should observe how she bore up against the disagreeableness of her situation; it had not (he continued) escaped him, that, as long as the impression remained upon Mrs. Hylier's mind, that it would *please him* to be kind to his protegée, she was tolerably considerate; but when she found that he neglected her altogether—the circumstance that would have drawn a noble mind to be more gracious to one so utterly deserted by the world, rendered Mrs. Hylier careless and unfeeling. Mr. Byfield had his own way of doing every thing; and there is little doubt, from his own statement, that he would have gone on, heaping mystery on mystery, had he not been suddenly aroused to a sense of Miss Dawson's uncomplaining illness, by her appearance in the park; and, after much mental deliberation, he determined—still after his own strange fashion—to provide her a quiet home, and be himself the bearer of his reasons to Mrs. Hylier.

"I thought," he said, "that fertile as you and your friend Mrs. Ryal are in attributing impurity to pure motives, you would hardly have *dared* to pin a slander upon these white hairs, or suppose that so single-minded and self-sacrificing a creature as Miss Dawson would rush into vice—and such vice! I did imagine, indeed, that you would have considered me her father; but to have thought and acted as you have done—to have turned her pennyless——"

"I did not!" screamed Mrs. Hylier; "I gave her a month's salary—I—I"——and then she appealed to Mr. Hylier, to know why *he* suffered her to be insulted; and, losing all command of herself, reiterated her opinion of Mr. Byfield's conduct.

"For shame!" said her husband. "Mr. Byfield, I entreat you to consider how Mrs. Hylier has been acted upon by the misrepresentations of Mrs. Ryal. She does not think her own thoughts, or speak her own words."

"I do!" repeated the foolish woman. "If it is not as I say—what connexion is he of Miss Dawson's?"

"HER GRANDFATHER!" answered the old man. "And had I not believed that I could place dependence alone upon a character that has been steeped to the lips in the bitter waters of the

world's strife—I ought to be ashamed to own it. Why, then, should I feel such bitterness towards you—poor *thing* of a whirling world! You!—upon whom she had no claim; but *that* is false. Madam, there are women in the world who acknowledge the claim of sisterhood, even when it is covered by the rags of shame; who seek to save—whose hands are filled to overflowing by the charity which God pours into their hearts; whose means, however small, like the widow's cruise, increase by giving; whose names will ascend and form part of the glory of the everlasting heavens, when ours will leave no record save upon the cold and lying tombstone! Oh, my God! my God! why do you not soften our hearts before it is too late!"

Mrs. Hylier would have essayed, if she dared, to say that she did not believe he was Emily's grandfather, but she could not; and Mr. Hylier, while the old man paced the room violently, and wrung his hands, whispered her he had but that morning returned from the neighbourhood where her mother died, and where her extraordinary and unceasing efforts for the support of that dear mother, particularly during the last years of her life, were talked of among a domestic and parent-loving people, as something so enduring, so patient, so gentle, so holy, as to be quite wonderful. "And this is the creature," he added, "that the gossip of a chattering neighbourhood prompted you to insult. I felt honoured by my friend's desire that I should investigate for myself, and all I can say is, that if I had had the slightest knowledge of her high qualities, she should never have been treated as she has been."

"A lesson!—a lesson!" said the old man, in a voice hoarse with an emotion he used every exertion to control—"A lesson to us all, Hylier. But now to find my—yes, my child—the child of my daughter, and tell her who I am." He again paced the room, pressing his hands together, and almost convulsed.

"May I hope, sir"—— stammered Mrs. Hylier.

"Hope nothing, madam," he interrupted, "as I do, but that time may be given *you*, as well as *me*, to render justice."

And now, if my tale were to end, as made-up stories do, with a record that the old man found his grandchild much better than

he had anticipated; that they lived for a short time happily together, and then the governess was married to a great lord, to the discomfiture of all gossips, I should substitute fiction for fact—which I cannot do. The life of a young woman, devoted to the instruction of youth, may be likened to those streams we read of—springing up we know not where—which murmur along, fertilising as they flow; and then, after trees, and flowers, and sightly plants, have sprung up through their unhonoured influence—behold! they have disappeared into the bowels of the earth, and are seen no more! In society, we constantly meet young and accomplished ladies; their acquirements are universally acknowledged and admired; until they "came out," they were attended to always in their hours of study, of illness, of amusement, by their "governess." She is gone now; no one ever inquires after her. She is gone, if young enough, to another situation, again to attend upon young ladies in their hours of study, amusement, and illness—again to be dismissed —again forgotten. Surely it is a high privilege to be intrusted with the education of youth—one of the very highest that a woman can enjoy; and if she perform her duty, her services should *never be slighted or forgotten.* The "teacher" should rank, after her own immediate family, in the pupil's affections; or, if that cannot be (for we may respect those we do not love), in her esteem; she should always be honoured, and never permitted to want; her importance to society is as vital as the unseen sap to the blooming tree; her situation subordinate, her influence paramount—not in the usual course of influences, but if we look back to our own young days, we shall remember how much we learned from some patient teacher that directed us through after life. Our astonishment is often excited, not by the little which governesses know, but by their knowing so much. Nevertheless, until some decided step is taken by the legislature to regulate not only schools, but the education of teachers, there must always be a danger of their incompetency to perform at least a portion of all that is required of them. Still, in nine cases out of ten, what has been done for ourselves in the way of education, has been done by this hardly-used race. And, cer-

tainly, Mr. Byfield ought to have been satisfied with what Emily Dawson had already accomplished, without turning her over to one whom he knew would try her to the uttermost. His feelings were hardened, and he was rendered suspicious—by the past circumstances of a varied life—of there being any good in human nature; his benevolence was often frozen over; but when it thawed, the verdure of a generous nature came quickly forth.

The first step he endeavoured to take was to ascertain where Miss Dawson now was; but here he was baffled. The housemaid had received warning from her mistress the previous night, in consequence, she said, of her attention to "the governess;" and a few moments after Mr. Byfield had spoken to her, had gone, as Mrs. Hylier had commanded she should. The other servants pretended to be, or were, ignorant of her residence; and there had been such firmness of manner in her falsehood, that Mr. Byfield believed she had told the truth. The natural impetuosity of his character was now directed to find her out; and fancying she had gone to her old friends, he posted off, leaving a wonderful story to the good people of Kensington, which was told in at least twenty different ways, the *last* being the most extraordinary.

While all was agitation and confusion in her former home—while Mrs. Hylier reproached Mrs. Ryal, and Mrs. Ryal continued to assert that, despite all, she knew she was right—while Mrs. Gresham's soft heart yielded in all the weak lovingness of its nature to the conviction that Emily Dawson was a "wonder among governesses," and Miss Colette Mercier divided her feelings as equally as possible between "chere Emily," her new parasol, her chere maman, and a certain leaning towards a gentleman who always wore "such sweet kid gloves"—while the servants regretted they had not been more civil, and the visitors that they had not been more polite—Emily Dawson, overpowered by the weight of an illness she had so long borne up against, was lying utterly incapable of sustained thought or action in the small back room of a tiny house at Chelsea. Mary's arrival was a great consolation to her. She sat by her

bedside "mending up her things," and "quilling her caps," as a preparatory step to her "looking for a new place." Emily would have been glad had she talked less; but as she never expected an answer, and chattered in a low, sleepy, rippling tone of voice, it did not disturb her much. She spoke in what she considered would be the most consoling manner, showing how much better off Emily was "than many a poor lady governess she knew long ago." She told of one who, having lost her health, died in a workhouse, and no one ever looked after her; of another, who was the only comfort and support of a blind father, who would sit holding her hands in his, running his fingers over the arm worn to a shadow, listening for the doctor's tread, and turning his sightless eyes to his face, as if trying to read an opinion it gave the good doctor pain to pronounce. And then, how she did pray that God would take her father first; but the prayer was not heard, for she died, and every morning the father crawled to the churchyard. The little children would frequently go out of their way to guide him to his daughter's grave; and at last he died upon it, without a complaint; and the coroner returned a verdict—"Died by the visitation of God;" but she knew it was by the visitation of famine. "Another young person" passed by them every morning; there, that was her walk, she knew it by the halting, as she was lame, though for all that, she got over many a mile in a week. She had a turn for languages, and taught a great many at a shilling a-lesson, and had constant employment; and one sister instructed in music, and another in dancing. They worked very hard, and did not earn much, but they lived happily with one another, and liked it better than going out for good, though Miss Fanny (the dancer) was fearful she couldn't teach this last winter, from a wheezing she caught from damp feet, as she could not afford to ride. Indeed, Mary declared, in her time she had seen much misery under a thin silk gown; poor ladies were obliged to seem rich, for if they did not dress "respectable," no one would have them, though they hardly paid them enough to earn salt. Miss Dawson was happy, compared to many she knew. It was a pity that tradesmen did not keep their daughters to the shop instead

of giving them notions above one thing and below another. Making them governesses half times, was little better than making them slaves. Miss Dawson ought to bless her stars; for as soon as her cold wore away, she'd be sure of a good situation.

And she would have talked thus much longer, had not her mother called her out to inquire, if she knew "what property the 'poor lady' had," as a doctor ought to see her; and Mary, good-natured girl, spurned the question, yet coincided in the opinion, saying she was no expense to them, for she neither eat nor drank; and if she had, she had wherewith to pay—it may be remembered that Mary did not particularly adhere to truth—and that the doctor had better come at once; she would go and fetch him—and so she did; and when he heard her cough, and saw the flush upon her cheek, and her hair moist with the dews of that English disease to which thousands are sacrificed, he blistered her chest to relieve her breathing, ordered her a light diet, and particularly recommended Italy, the south of France, or Madeira; and that to a governess, with three pounds five and sixpence in her purse, and no friend!

"Oh, I shall soon be better, sir," she said—"very soon. I have been much worse; a few days' rest and quiet will quite set me up."

"Send to her friends," said the doctor to Mary.

"Lord, sir!" replied Mary, opening her eyes, "*sure she's only a governess!*"

Let any one recal the sick-bed of a beloved object suffering from hectic fever; how wearing that everlasting cough, which only ceases, to begin again; how sad, after you have drawn the curtain, softened the night-lamp, and given the composing draught, with an earnest prayer to Almighty God that the patient may enjoy sleep, how sad it is to hear the hack, hack, of the gasping chest breaking up the false repose, and then to know, by the movement and the sigh, that the poor patient has turned; and though the pillows are down, and the sheets cambric, and though thoughts and hands of tenderest love have smoothed them, and poured out the most soothing and reviving perfumes

—that still, though there is little positive pain, there is no rest; and you are called; —that sweet silver voice steals its melodious way from your ear to your heart; the church clock has struck two, and the watcher's eyes are heavy, but the eyes of the watched are bright; and she will have you open the curtain, and she talks of things to come in this world—of the spring time and the summer, and of when she shall be better, and of how pleasantly the autumn will pass at the sea-side; the summer will fly quite away with her cough, and then she shall so enjoy the autumn! And while she talks, her thin pure face and glorious brow, round which the damp air clings, rests on your bosom, and you know that it is now December; but that autumn, summer, spring, will never again be gladdened by that hopeful voice! Nothing can bring her back the ease of body which the poor cat enjoys before the fire; tended as she is, by the watchful love of a whole house, she knows not rest. How much more must the governess have suffered in that small room, upon a hard bed, shaken by kindly but rough hands, believing that if God prolonged the life which, despite our sufferings, we all cling to, it would be ended—where? Alas! *no hospital will open its doors to consumption;* the lagging, certain, wearing, wasting complaint, engendered by our shivering atmosphere, of which so many hundreds, *especially governesses*, perish, finds no public friend in charitable England.[1] But it was not only the wretched, unrelieved weariness, and pain of body, Emily suffered; it was, that she had been hooted forth characterless; she, the pure, high-minded, upright, honourable girl, trembled lest she was sinking into her grave tainted; that she would meet her mother with the mark of shame which passeth not away upon her brow. The notion haunted her; the thought of it would not let her sleep by night or by day; she said in the morning she would be better by the evening, and in the evening she would be certainly better in the morning; for she was of a hopeful spirit; and her

[1] I rejoice to be enabled now to correct this statement; there *is* an hospital for consumption; at Old Brompton too; I see it from my room-window every day, and bless God who prompted high, though comparatively humble, minds, to remove from our country, and, for ever, a deep reproach.

disease—slow, pallid, traitor it is—encouraged hope. Several days elapsed, and her little money, despite Mary's exertions, was nearly gone. With the high-toned generosity of a noble mind, she would not write to her friend of her distress, for she knew she had not the means to relieve her; and why should she make her unhappy? She did write, though, a little every day, resolving to send the letter off *when she was better*. The doctor saw she grew rapidly worse, more rapidly than usual, for her mind was goading the disease to double speed; her money was gone, though Mary stoutly said it was not, and showed her silver, which the girl had pledged her own Sunday shawl to obtain.

In the meantime Mr. Byfield was driven almost to madness. What would he not have given to have had the power of recalling his former harshness?—how he deprecated the bitterness which made him change even his name, that his child might never hear of him! How cruel did he deem what a little time before he would have called his consistency! how did he mingle tears with his morning and evening prayers, and in positive agony call upon his wife to forgive him his unforgiveness towards his child! He found no trace of his granddaughter in her native place, and in London he was bewildered by the difficulties he experienced everywhere.

Mary had only been a few weeks at Mrs. Hylier's, and had covered her retreat with what she considered admirable skill. The abruptness and violence of Mr. Byfield's manner frustrated his own plans; but fortunately, Mrs. Gresham, who had taken from the first a warm interest in Emily, was more successful. She made inquiries with a woman's tact, and at last communicated the good news, that she had traced Miss Dawson to Mary's house. The old man entreated her to accompany him there, and she consented. Mary's mother had become very discontented at her lodger's poverty, and mother and daughter were in loud altercation on the subject, when Mr. Byfield, unable to restrain his impatience, thundered so loudly at the door, as to bring all the inhabitants of the street to their windows.

"I tell you, sir, I know nothing about her. How should I?" exclaimed Mary to Mr. Byfield, who could only get his

stick through the open door, for she held it close with a considerable share of strength. "It's no use your coming in; she's not here; and if she was, what is it to you, you old sinner?"

"I tell you," said Mr. Byfield, "she is my grandchild. God help me!" muttered the old man, as he leant against the door-post; "God help me! that rough girl guards her honour more carefully than I did."

"That's impossible!" answered Mary. "If you was her grandfather, you'd never have sent her governessing to Mrs. Hylier, I know."

"I am here, Mary," said the gentle voice of Mrs. Gresham; "and it is quite true that Miss Dawson is Mr. Byfield's granddaughter."

Mary opened the door with what, in the poor, is deemed "impertinence," in the rich "self-possession," as if nothing had occurred; curtsied them in, and hoped that Mr. Byfield would not think the worse of her; she was a poor girl; and though great folks might live without a character, she could not.

Mrs. Gresham told Miss Dawson of her true position, as delicately and carefully as it could be told; and accounted for the old man's strangeness by expressing the desire he felt to see, himself, how she would bear the rubs of life. She thanked God earnestly for the disclosure. The old man knelt by her bedside, and called her "his child"—"his dear child"—"his only hope and comfort on this side the grave." Alas! people who are liberal of the bitters of existence, should remember, that poison, even unto death, may steal into the cup.

In a few hours, Emily was removed upon luxurious cushions to the house of which she had become the honoured mistress; even Mrs. Hylier sent her little girls to minister to her comforts; and Mary was, of course, with her. A sudden spirit of sisterly love and tenderness sprang up amongst those who had been accounted censorious and malevolent; and the surrounding maids, wives, and widows became animated by a most extraordinary longing to inquire into the state of Miss Dawson's health. They ascertained what Mr. Byfield's name had been, and that he had

changed it to avoid his daughter's recognition. This knowledge afforded them satisfaction; they did not even venture to censure the unpardonable harshness of a father to a child, though some of the more independent spirits among them insinuated, that "it was at least very strange, and carrying resentment farther than *they* could have done." Mrs. Ryal was the only one who remained firm to her first "principles," and opinions.

Every thing that skill could suggest, or luxury invent, was resorted to for the relief and comfort of the long-neglected girl. The great physician of the day told her grandfather, who stood before him with clasped and trembling hands, watchful eyes and ears, drinking in his words, that when she was able to be removed, he would recommend the south of Italy. This was in her dressing-room—a room hung with pale pink silk, where the softest breeze whispered its way amid crowded exotics, and the very light of heaven stole through tinted glass; where the old man himself removed his shoes before he entered, lest the smallest noise might disturb the creature cushioned upon satin, who, only a few weeks before, was expected to brave cold winds and everlasting fatigue. The reaction upon the grandfather's mind amounted almost to insanity. The stern, bitter satirist had melted into a fond old man, who seemed absorbed in having once more something upon which he could safely pour out his long pent-up affections.

The physician again felt her pulse, spoke a few kindly words, and departed. So softly did Mr. Byfield follow him down stairs, that he did not even hear his foot-fall; but he arrested his attention when in the hall, by pressing his arm. "Sir, sir," he said, in a trembling tone; "in here—speak softly—she does not like noise. You said, when she was able, we were to go to the south of Italy. Now, how soon will that be? We have had some sharp north winds—those keep her back; but will it be when the wind changes?"

"Not so soon as that, my good sir; but I hope soon—*indeed* I hope it—she has interested me much. You must keep her quiet—perfect repose—she must speak as little as possible; she

must not exert herself in the least; her lungs have been overworked."

"God forgive me; they have, they have!"

"We must watch the symptoms, and act accordingly."

"Certainly, sir; but you say this climate is not fit for her?"

"It is not; but she cannot bear exertion yet. Good morning, my dear sir; I will try and be here to-morrow precisely at the same hour."

"You do not trifle with me, sir, do you?—raising hope to destroy it?" inquired the old man, almost fiercely.

"I have raised no hope," returned the doctor. "If she bears removal, it must be to the south of Italy." Mr. Byfield caught at the back of a chair, and gasped for breath; at last he repeated, "If—if; you said *if*. Is there any doubt, then?"

The agony of despair in the old man's face compelled the doctor to lay down his hat; and seat himself by Mr. Byfield's side.

"My dear, good sir, I never deceive; and I hope you will nerve yourself as becomes a Christian. All things are possible; and everything shall be, indeed of late *has been*, done to overthrow our insidious foe. If I had seen her sooner"—the old man started as if an asp had stung him; "though, indeed, that might not have availed much," continued the ready doctor; "she is young—the summer before her—let us hope for the best; but, frankly, the symptoms are against us."

"But she said she was so much better this morning?"

"It is a cause of exceeding thankfulness to find her so cheerful."

"And a good sign, sir?"

"The sign of a good mind," replied the doctor, evasively.

Mr. Byfield was gratified by the idea. "And so she has—an angel's mind," he answered. "Perhaps you can tell me to-morrow about Italy, sir. I have worked hard all my life, and have been a thriving man—more rich than people think, sir. I will heap gold upon that table, so that you cannot move it, if you but save her life."

"What an extraordinary development of character!" thought

the physician, as his carriage rolled away; "why, a tithe of this care would have saved her—ay, six months ago!"

"And where have you been, dear grandpapa?" said Emily, as he stole into her room, to sit and look at her: "where have you been?"

"Hush! you must not talk!" he said.

"Oh, but I may; a little under my breath. I used to be obliged to talk, but now it is a pleasure. Do let me mention what we spoke of yesterday—the nice alms-houses you said you would build for aged governesses. Oh, how glad I shall be to see the first stone laid! When shall it be?—Next August, on my birth-day?—Or, come here, I will speak very softly, if you will not be angry. My poor mother! She used to be so proud of her governess-child! Will you lay the first stone on *her* birth-day? Thank you, dear grandpapa! Bless you! I shall not want to go to Italy; that will cure me!"

It was beautiful to observe, that, though this creature loved life as a young bird loves to poise upon its feeble wings, she did not fear death. As her frame decayed—as she wasted into a shadowy outline of what all those who had known her, *now* declare had been so lovely, her mind became more buoyant—purer it could hardly be—though more ethereal, when her cough permitted short snatches of sleep. She seemed as if, through these thin eyelids, she gazed upon all the mysteries of an unclouded world; a perpetual smile parted the pallid lip, like the division of a lily-bud; and when she awoke, it was to confer fresh interest on the things of life.

Poor Miss Mercier would kneel for hours by her side, and smile and weep by turns. "It did her good," she said; and she said rightly; such scenes do good—they strike upon the heart; there is no deception in them.

"Do not weep for me," said Emily; "I shall be better soon. Every day I become better; and if I could only make you feel the importance of your duties, I should be so much happier. I am changed, though, a good deal. Were I to teach again, I would try and interest my pupils more about Hereafter than I did. I would talk to them much more about the heavens, those

lightsome heavens where the just are made perfect; it is so happy to think of their radiance, their glory, their eternity; and to think of this beautiful world, in which I once sorrowed and laboured, and yet loved; for surely it was created by God as a place of passage, where the good may have a foretaste of the happiness prepared for them hereafter!"

She would talk thus to all, pouring forth the very sweetness of wisdom; so that people wondered how she had gained such knowledge. Her two former pupils could hardly be separated from her; and though her grandfather manifested much impatience at being disturbed from her side by any one, still he was so proud of her sweet mind, that he could not refuse them admission, but made up for disappointments by stealing into the room during the night, and watching or praying while the heavy-eyed nurse slept. Each day the physician came, and each day the old gentleman would follow him outside the door, and inquire, as though the question were still new, "When will the time come? When may we go to Italy?" And the doctor would reply, with a kind look, "Not yet."

To all beside—except herself—it was evident she was dying: it is almost too hard a word to apply to such a passing away; it was as if a rose dropped leaf by leaf, until the last few petals that remained trembled on the stem. She said, every day, she was better—much better: she had no pain now; and she should soon be able to drive out in the warm sunshine. Her friend, the clergyman's sister, came to her from the country. And the clergyman himself, he who had attended her mother's death-bed, prayed beside hers. It might have been that the young man loved her; but she never dreamt he did—never. She talked a great deal of the past and future, and of what blessings would arise from a higher-toned education. And one morning in particular, when the doctor called, he reproved her for wasting her strength in words. Again Mr. Byfield followed him outside the room, and the physician led him into another apartment, and closed the door.

"My dear sir," he said, "our dear patient is very weak to-day."

"She said she was better," replied Mr. Byfield.

"She is not: her mind is purer, and higher, and holier than ever; but she is sinking."

"Not unto death?" muttered the old man.

The physician turned away; he could not bear to look upon the features of the old man—"God bless you, sir; you have a great consolation; everything has been done that could be done: I wish I was as sure of heaven as she is. Good morning—be composed."

The old man turned away—he was alone—he sank into a chair; burst after burst of tears convulsed his frame. It was nearly four hours before he could enter her room again; he saw she was greatly changed in that short space of time, and yet she hailed him with her feeble voice, declaring she was better. He motioned Miss Mercier, who had been with her, to leave the chamber. He took her hand in his, gazed earnestly into her face, and sank upon his knees.

"It is not time for prayer yet, is it?—it is not night yet?" she said. "But pray, dear grandfather; it is always time for prayer."

"I am going," he answered, "to pray to you. Listen! Here on my knees, I do entreat your pardon; an old man, whose harshness deprived you of your mother—whose harshness has abridged the length of your sweet life. I did not intend to try you beyond your strength, but I ought to have known better. I chained you with those hands to the galley, when I should have given you freedom. Can you forgive me, Emily? And when you meet your mother, will you ask her not to turn from me in heaven as I turned from her on earth?"

The poor girl was deeply affected; she threw herself feebly forward, and clasped her arms round his neck, and pressed her cheek to his. She poured forgiveness and blessings on his white head, and fondly pushed back the silver hair from his brow. He replaced her on her pillows, but the exertion had shaken the sand in the glass of life: it was passing rapidly.

"You will be kind to those I love," she said, "and truly forgive those who were harsh to me; and you will be very good to poor Mary: and—oh, heavenly Father, receive my spirit!"

These were her last words. The old man, frantic with grief, despatched the nurse, who had just entered the room, for help; and when she returned, the dead face of his grandchild was resting on his breast; and he held up his finger, and said, "Hush! hush!" as though she slept, which he believed she did; and all night long he remained in the same position, murmuring every now and then, as if soothing a slumbering infant.

The old man is still living, but his mind is gone; and his heart is in her grave,—which he persists in saying was dug by his hands.

GRACE HUNTLEY.

"WE will call her Grace," said a pale, delicate-looking young woman to her husband, as she raised the white flannel hood, that he might gaze upon the features of their new-born babe. "Abel, I never expected to be the mother of a living child; but God has been merciful; so we will give to her the gentle name of Grace; and, dearest, let us pray that, in all the troubles and trials of life, not the name merely, but the spirit may dwell with her!"

It was only a few weeks afterwards that the grave closed over the fair young mother; but the blessing wherewith she had blessed her child had been heard and registered in heaven.

"You are not angry with me, dear father—not angry with your poor Grace—and you will forgive Joseph Huntley! O!" added the girl playfully, "if we youngsters could but get your wisdom, without your wrinkles, what wonderful creatures we should be!"

"My child, my child! age will bring wrinkles, as autumn brings withered leaves; yet wisdom doth not always come with years. But our hearts do not grow old, girl; so I forgive you!"

"And Joseph too, father!"

The schoolmaster (for such was his calling) shook his head. "Of all the youths it has been my fortune to instruct, I never met with so wilful a boy as Joseph Huntley."

"He is not a boy now, father; you forget he is now out of his time."

"So much the worse. His master, worthy Matthew Greenshaw, tells me he spoils more mahogany than any apprentice that ever entered his house; and you know, Grace, the desk he made as a present for me last Christmas, tumbled to pieces the second time I leant upon it."

"Dear father, you lean your elbows so heavily! But Joseph has made you such a pretty ruler of cherry-tree wood!"

"I believe he is a kind-hearted fellow; but, dear Grace, a kind heart alone will not insure prosperity; there must be forethought, and industry, and discretion. And truth to say, I fear your heart is too much set upon this same Joseph Huntley. Whatever he does, you view in one light and I in another. I would not judge harshly, my dear child; yet do I wish it had pleased God your mother had lived: it is no easy thing for a man to bring up a daughter, and make her learned in woman's craft, and other matters meet for her to understand. A pains-taking schoolmaster, like myself, has but small opportunity of cultivating a knowledge of female sentiment; yet have I not been a bad father, for never did I harbour the thought of giving a second mother dominion over you; and, albeit you are not skilled in the arts of cross-stitch, back-stitch, or Quaker's hem, which our good neighbour Mrs. Craddock so exceedingly laments, yet is our house clean and well-ordered—and few girls comprehend better the

first four rules of arithmetic, or can write a fairer hand, than my own Grace." The simple-minded man looked upon his darling child for a few moments, while a feeling of pride irradiated his countenance; a change, however, soon passed over it, a change striking, yet not uncommon—a change from pride to piety; his eye moistened, and his voice faltered, as, laying his hand upon the beautiful head of his only one, he continued: "And when I am laid in my grave, Grace, you will remember that your poor old father taught you more than mere writing and ciphering; you will remember our quiet evenings, when you sat upon this footstool, and we conversed together on the piety of the Danish Canute, who showed unto his courtiers the vanity of earthly grandeur by a very simple expedient;—on the dignity and purity of our English Alfred, whose virtues were so happily tempered, so justly blended, that each prevented the other from exceeding its proper bounds,—or on the grace and beauty of Cornelia, who regarded her noble children as the richest jewels a matron could possess. You will also call to mind passages of our sublime Milton, which you learned as a recreation from graver studies; but, above all, my child will bear in her memory our holy and simple Sabbath enjoyments—the free, unfettered day, rightly appreciated only by those who toil wearily through the week—the clear breezy morning—the early prayer—the walk to the village church—the evening sacrifice in our own cottage. Ah! I could never read the story of Joseph and his brethren, or the sweet reply of Ruth to her mother, without weeping; and you, too, Grace,—can you ever forget the parable of the five wise virgins? How often have I prayed that the Lord, when He came, might find us watching! And surely my prayers were heard, for you are a good girl, Grace—although something wilful in the matter of Joseph Huntley, who, by the way, I see coming over the meadow. Perhaps he can mend my desk."

"Then you forgive him, father?"

"Forgive him!—why, yes; for, to own the truth, I forget what it was I was angry about! Do you remember?"

"Oh! never mind, dear father, never mind!" and Grace kissed her father affectionately, but too well pleased that his

memory was somewhat, and not unfrequently, treacherous concerning late events.

It would, in all human probability, have been far happier for Grace had her mother lived. Abel had spoken truly in saying he had but small opportunity of cultivating a knowledge of what he called "female sentiment;" and though he formed his daughter's mind to the best of his ability, yet he formed, or rather directed it, so as to draw forth the higher and nobler faculties, while those that are called into action by the every-day and homely occurrences of life were, comparatively, neglected. It was fortunate for Grace that she was wholly exempt from those small vanities which so often obtain dominion over females who acquire only a moderate degree of information. But she was preserved by the halo and protection of pure and self-denying religious impressions. There are those whose apparent belief emanates from circumstances—the seed is scattered by the way-side, and the fowls of the air may pick or uproot it. But the religion of the schoolmaster's daughter was not of this kind. The seed had been sown in good ground, and its fruit was peace, hope, love, and a tender caring for others—the only unquestionable proof of true charity. She was, as her father has said, wilful in the matter of Joseph Huntley, and it was as regarded him that a mother's watchfulness was more especially needed. That the old man was dissatisfied with the person on whom her affections had been placed was evident, since observations such as those I have recorded were of frequent occurrence; yet parent and child differed in the conclusions drawn from the actions of the lover: and no wonder. Acquainted with the schoolmaster's abstracted and peculiar habits, young Huntley was less careful before him than before Grace. Now, a mother would have had sufficient skill, had she perceived his evil propensities, to exhibit them palpably in the presence of her daughter; well knowing that railing at faults the existence of which is not credited, is the sure way to confirm affection in a youthful bosom—the generous mind being always roused at the bare idea of injustice. But worthy Abel Darley had no notion of such management; he satisfied his conscience by frequent allusions to Joseph's faults,

and then, imagining he had been too severe, he would, in nearly the same breath, lavish praises on his virtues.

As the lover entered the schoolmaster's cottage, it was impossible not to admire his manly form and excellent carriage. Considerably above the middle height, his head well placed, and his finely-developed features set off to every possible advantage by a scrupulous attention to neat and even gentlemanly attire, Joseph Huntley might well have been pronounced the handsomest youth in the village of Craythorpe. When he took off his hat, however, there was invariably mingled with admiration a feeling for which it was difficult to account. Those skilled in physiognomy would have observed that his forehead was too low, and that a peculiar contraction of the brows denoted the vicinity of stormy passions; the mouth was mean in expression, but as it usually extended into a smile, discovering even and beautiful teeth, the defect escaped general notice; and Joseph Huntley was accounted, as I have said, the handsomest youth in the retired village of Craythorpe. What he was in reality, actions will tell better than words; but my readers must permit me to remind them that, in books as well as in actual life, it takes time for character to unfold itself.

About fifteen months after Abel Darley had complained of Joseph Huntley's bad workmanship and careless habits, his zeal for his daughter's happiness triumphed over his fears, and he gave all that he valued upon earth into the keeping of one she loved, "not wisely, but too well."

The father shuddered involuntarily, and turned pale, as he presented her hand to the gay bridegroom; and all present were dismayed by an oversight of the sexton, who opened the prayer-book at the funeral, instead of the wedding, service. The clergyman had absolutely read the first few words before the error was discovered. Old women grouped in the churchyard to talk over the unlucky omen; and the bride's companions blessed her with a tearful earnestness, rarely to be seen among the youthful at a rustic wedding.

Alas! for the loneliness of the father's hearth, when it is deserted by a beloved, an only child! Often did Abel Darley

lift his eyes from the Bible, whereon (perhaps for the first time since his fire-side was first left desolate) he looked without receiving instruction—often did he raise them from the sacred page, and gaze upon the long candle, wondering why it waxed dim—and then, remembering that the hand which trimmed it was away, and another's, sigh heavily, and pore again over the book, without, however, brightening the light, or calling to the little serving-maiden to do so for him;—then, when the clock chimed ten, he read aloud as usual the evening prayer, and commenced the simple hymn that consecrates the name of Ken more than the mitre which crowned his brows. He had taught Grace, when a child, to sing with him, alternately, a verse of this gentle strain; and when he finished the line—

"Beneath thine own almighty wings,"

he paused for a few moments, expecting to hear her voice, so low, so soft, so like the murmuring music of a young bird's warblings before it knows its own power of song; then, as if the truth came suddenly upon him, that her melody had gone to delight another's dwelling, the old man burst into a flood of tears, and, covering his face with his hands, wept long and bitterly, even to the solitary hour of one, when, like a troubled child, he retired to his bed, and sobbed and slumbered until morn.

"Grace, what are you in such a bustle about?" inquired her husband, as she busied herself with more than usual diligence to set all things in order in their clean and cheerful-looking cottage.

Grace silently pointed to the watch that hung over the chimney-piece.

"Well," replied he, "and what then? I see it is rather late; but this is Sunday, and we who work must have a holiday sometimes."

"And so we should, Joseph. But do you not hear—"

"What?"

"The church-bell?"

"Well?"

"Come then, dearest, and make haste, or we shall be late, and that will not be right."

"Then, I suppose, it will be wrong. But I do not think I shall go to church to-day."

"My dear, are you ill?" inquired his wife, looking affectionately in his face.

"Never was better; but I don't feel inclined—is that so very extraordinary?"

"Oh, Joseph! you will surely not stay from church!—what would the clergyman think?—what would my father say? You will not suffer me to walk all through the lanes by myself, dear Joseph!"

"But you are not obliged to go. It is very proper to attend church; but to tramp such a distance through all weathers!—why it rained almost the whole night!"

"It is beautiful now; the air is so clear, and the birds are singing so gaily! O, do come!"

"I will not; so do not tease me; I must take a long walk after dinner."

"Dear Joseph," she continued, kissing him, though her eyes were filled with tears, "and must I, indeed, go by myself?"

"If you go, you must most certainly," he replied, returning her caress at the same time with all his usual affection.

It was the first solitary walk she had taken during the last seven months—since her marriage, in fact; and she thought that, considering her situation, it was rather unkind of Joseph to permit her to go alone.

Almost every tree—certainly every stile she passed – was hallowed by some remembrance connected with the playmate of her childhood—the lover of her early youth—the husband of her affections. When she looked on the dew dancing amid the delicate tracery of the field-spider's web—when the joyous whistle of the gay blackbird broke upon her ear—gazing silently on all that was really fresh and beautiful in nature—she felt that, instead of warming, it fell chillily upon her heart. And yet all was as usual—the bright sun, and the smiling landscape. Why, then, was she less cheerful? She was alone!

No one she loved was by her side, to whom to say, "How beautiful!"

The knowledge, the painful knowledge, which this, and a few other similar circumstances, conveyed to Grace, as to the real state of her husband's religious sentiments, made her a wiser but a sadder woman. Conscious that he had deceived her in one instance, she dreaded to ask herself if the deception extended also to minor matters. He no longer deemed it necessary to keep up even appearances, and not unfrequently jested at the simplicity of his wife's once believing him "a saint;" although, when she first became a mother, he seemed pleased and amused with the infant, and either was, or affected to be, touched by the earnest prayers and supplications she poured forth, that the child might be blessed, and become worthy of the name and calling of a Christian.

Had Grace made a parade of her feelings, her husband, judging from his own, might have doubted their sincerity; but he only heard them when she thought him hushed in sleep. At the midnight watch, when she trimmed her lamp, and looked into the peaceful face of her little one, so tranquil in its slumbers, then her prayers were not loud, but deep; for a tender mother's hopes, as she gazes on her child, are ever mingled with fears—fears which nothing can dispel, except a true and perfect trustfulness in the all-watchful care of a benevolent God. It may be that, as with the woman in Scripture, her first entreaties have been unanswered; yet is she not weary; her voice neither falters nor fails; the heart is still petitioning, and the pious mother's prayer floats upwards—on, on, from sphere to sphere—until it reaches the throne of the Great Omnipotent, whose dearest attribute is mercy!

I have said that his wife's maternal tenderness affected a heart which every-day occurrences continued to steep more deeply in hardness and sin; for the progress from idleness to comparative want, from want to vice, whether slow or not, is sure; and even a disinclination to employment, where there is nothing but industry to look to for support, is in itself a crime that heralds the approach of crimes more consuming. So that, when the

momentary excitement to good feeling was past, Joseph Huntley relaxed into a cold indifference towards those whom it was his duty to cherish.

The rapidity with which love may glide from the heart of a man is a moral phenomenon for which it would puzzle philosophers to account. The brief space of a few months not unfrequently converts the devoted into the unkind, or—to a delicate mind, still worse—the neglectful, husband. Grace knew that Joseph's circumstances, when they married, were prosperous; but very soon after she was made a wife, a change came over all things—gradually it came, as a small cloud increases to an overwhelming tempest. In his business young Huntley might have been distinguished; but the orders he received were slighted for the boon companions of the village ale-house; and debts accumulated, which there was no money to pay.

"What sort of bread do you call this?" inquired Joseph, somewhat sulkily, of her who had prepared a homely cake, and baked it over the ashes, for his supper.

"It is nice wholesome food, Joseph, for I made it myself. You used to like my cakes."

"But the flour is coarse."

Grace did not reply.

"Did you hear me say the flour is coarse?"

"It is not as fine as usual, for I brought it from my father's — he gave me some; and—and—"

"And what, Grace?—women are seldom slow of speech."

"The baker, love, has asked so often for his bill, that, as you told me I should have money to-morrow to pay him, I did not like to get anything more till then."

"Tell him to-morrow that I cannot pay him for a month; and manage, at the same time, to have properly boulted flour to make your cakes. This eats like saw-dust."

"My dear, dear Joseph! I really cannot put the man off. I promised faithfully, as you told me. I will work night and day, Joseph—I will do anything you desire; but do not make me the instrument of falsehood—indeed, indeed, it will break my heart!"

Her husband looked for a moment into her face; but his countenance expressed no sympathy with her honest feelings.

"Grace, you are a fool! What does a little longer credit signify to such a man as Mealbag? Or—hark ye, Grace—what does it matter if, like my betters, I, one of these days, give leg-bail for my debts, or sleep three months in a well-guarded house, commonly called a gaol?"

The colour faded from the young woman's countenance as she returned her husband's gaze; another moment, and the warm red blood rushed back to her cheek, and her fine eyes brightened with an expression that his could not encounter.

"What!" she exclaimed, vehemently, "turn rogue, Joseph!—be pointed at as a dishonest tradesman!—cheat those who labour for their food. If anything has occurred, not brought on by your own carelessness—do not frown, I did not mean *that*—if anything has happened, no matter how it has been brought on, to prevent your paying, and that soon, take all—take everything—the bed from under us—the gown I wear—all, all I have in the world;—sell, and pay—pay to the last farthing.—I can work! Oh, yes! I could beg—starve!—but I could not bear any one to call you rogue!—or our child, Joseph—our dear, dear child—a dishonest man's son!" She clasped her boy to her bosom; and then, again looking on her husband, threw herself into his arms, and pressing her cheek, moist with tears, to his, murmured, "But you *did* not mean it, Joseph—you *could* not mean it—you never could mean *that!* You only said it to tease, to try me; but it was very cruel of you! Just say you did not mean it."

"What a fuss about a simple word! Why, girl, you are more silly than I took you for! Mean it!—no, no! But, Grace, you need not have turned so suddenly on me, even if I *did* mean it. I have heard of women who would bear much more for their husband's good than that."

"For your good, Joseph!" she replied passionately: "O, yes! for your good I would bear anything; but it could never be for your good to have your name joined by dishonesty to dishonour. Say you did not mean it, and I will believe you—but just say it

again, Joseph—just once more! Thank you. And now," she added, drawing a heavy breath, and rising from his bosom, "my heart is lighter—and—may I go on?"

"Yes."

"You will pay the baker to-morrow?"

"I cannot. The money I intended for him I have been obliged to give elsewhere."

"What, to the man who sold you the mahogany?"

"Yes, and for other little matters; so, dear, you must put off the baker, you see.—Why, my little Abel cannot eat this bread! —One of your sweet smiles will put him off;—or else you must borrow the money from your father."

"I cannot do either," she replied, shaking her head mournfully. "I *promised* the baker; and my poor father has no money, except a small sum laid by to purchase a new great-coat and some flannel, for winter: perhaps you could not repay him before that season came. But, Joseph, listen—my silk cloak—what do I want with such finery? The glazier's wife said she would give two pounds for a cloak of the kind; so let her have it. I hope you will like me as well in a tenpenny print, particularly when you see that I have kept my word."

There is something so commanding, so holy, in virtue, that, though the wicked may not imitate, they cannot withhold from it their admiration. As Huntley looked upon his wife, he thought she had never appeared so lovely. Some of the affection of earlier and purer years returned warmly to his heart; and, as he kissed her, words of happier import broke from his lips—"God bless you, Grace! I am a sad scoundrel, and that's the truth."

Years rolled into eternity; the million, indeed, heeded not their passing, but Grace Huntley had recorded them with tears. Meanwhile her husband sunk deeper and deeper in vice; yet the misery that followed schooled her still more in the ways of virtue. "They are bitter," she would say, "but perhaps they are useful lessons." It was sad indeed to know that the hearts which once were united had severed—and severed—and severed, until, as with the rich man and Lazarus in the parable, "there was a great gulf" between them. At first distrust, next cold-

ness, then reproaches, ended in—but no! they did not hate each other; she could *not* hate him who had received her early and only love—the man to whom, at God's altar, she had sworn duty and affection. The heart she had trusted she would have given worlds to recall to virtue; and the voice which now seldom spoke but to blaspheme, how she prayed that it might again be restored to the music of former years—the harmony of kindness and sweet communion! She could not hate him; and he, base and hardened as he was, could not hate her.

In less than eight years after their marriage, her little family were entirely dependent upon her for support. The workshop, filled with implements and materials for labour, had passed into other hands; and the pretty cottage, with its little flower-garden, was tenanted by a more industrious master. For months together, Joseph used to absent himself from home, under the pretext of seeking employment. So ruined was his reputation, that no one in his own neighbourhood would entrust him with work; and he was but too willing to follow the wandering bent of his disordered mind. How he was really occupied during these excursions was a profound secret even to his wife. Sometimes he returned well dressed, and with plenty of money, which he would lavish foolishly, in sudden fits of affection, upon his children. On other occasions, he appeared with hardly sufficient clothes to cover him—poor, and suffering bodily and mental misery. Then, when from *her* earnings he was provided and fed, he would again go forth, and neither be seen nor heard of for many months.

When chid by her neighbours for the kindness with which she treated this reckless spendthrift, she would reply calmly, "He is my husband—the father of my children; and, as such, can I see him want?"

From the very day she had parted with her first portion of dress to pay the baker's bill, she had toiled unceasingly with her own hands for the benefit of her family. Mrs. Craddock could no longer say that she was unskilled in woman's craft; to the astonishment of all, in a little time she was the most exquisite needlewoman in the neighbourhood. Nothing came amiss

in the way of labour. Long before daylight she was busied with her housewifery -- the earliest smoke of the village was from the chimney of her neat, though plain and scantily-furnished cottage; and so punctual was she in her engagements, that "As true as Grace Huntley" became a proverb in Craythorpe. Humble yet exalted distinction!—one that all desire—so few deserve!

With increasing years, the mind of Abel Darley became more and more absent; nevertheless, though decidedly opposed to all modern innovations, (whenever, indeed, he could be made to consider the import of such things,) he still continued to perform his duty of instructing his pupils on the approved old plan—that is to say, with a birch rod in the right hand, and a lesson-book in the left. Yet was the schoolmaster not prone to chastisement, retaining the birch rather as an emblem of authority than for use. He had a ferule for big boys,—a fool's-cap for little ones; and lavished even more, if possible, than the indulgence usually bestowed by grandpapas on their grandchildren, upon "the child Abel," as he was wont to call his daughter's eldest son, who greatly resembled his father, not only in person, but in mind. The anxiety this resemblance caused his mother may be better imagined than described. The small cottage, which, when Abel was about twelve years old, sufficed for her dwelling, was nearly at the corner of the village churchyard, and about ten minutes' walk from her father's school-house. A small, green lane, that skirted the village, led by her door; and it was pleasant to see the merry, light-hearted boys, full of childish glee, passing along that shady path, after they had laid down their books, and given their whole anxieties to healthful play.

Her second son was a delicate and sickly child; but her girl—her Josephine, as she was named at her father's request, was the miniature resemblance of the still beautiful mother. Often had she watched, till her eyes became dim, and her heart swelled almost to bursting within her bosom, as her eldest-born led his little sister by the hand on his return from school—now chasing, to give her pleasure, the gay butterfly—then hanging from the branches of the sweet hawthorn or golden laburnum that fringed

the road, to gather for her the earliest and sweetest flowers. "They are so like us!" she would think,—"so like what we were! How well I can remember his father at his age, when first he came to the school, and used to watch over and play with me, as Abel does with Josephine!"

The increasing wilfulness and restlessness of young Abel's disposition supplied additional causes of sorrow to his anxious mother. If anything could reconcile her to her husband's absence, it was the consciousness that, were he living with them, his bad example would operate but too powerfully on their eldest son. Yet one better "taught" in the ways of the world, and the rules of modern education, might have envied Grace Huntley the skill she manifested in the management of her children.

"Had *his* mother so tutored her son, Joseph Huntley would have been a different sort of person," said the parish rector, Mr. Glasscott, one Sunday evening, to his wife, after young Abel had undergone a long examination, not only in the Church Catechism, but on the great leading doctrines of Christianity.

"True, my dear," replied his lady; "but there are few mothers like Grace Huntley, teaching and practising industry in the most wonderful manner—I may say, disdaining assistance; for I have thought that her lip curled with even more pride than befitted a Christian, when Lady Purcel offered her a dole of meal and money last Christmas."

"It was independence, not pride. They are, in effect, so like each other, that the world confounds them; but in reality they are very different. Grace Huntley is a Christian, and a high-minded woman, whose spirit has struggled nobly through adversity—subdued, but not broken, by the trials she has encountered."

"It is very long since her husband has been seen in the neighbourhood."

"So much the better; yet I have heard his poor wife declare that it would cost her less pain to close his eyes, and perform

the offices which the dead claim of the living, than to remain in the dreadful uncertainty that rankles in her heart like a rusted dagger."

"Poor woman! Has he not been suspected of crimes that the law might take hold of?"

"He has. I trust he may never be brought before me on any charge of the kind: for her sake, I should feel much grieved at performing a magistrate's duty."

On the same evening, Grace Huntley was sitting in the seat she had occupied in her father's cottage years before; and such were the schoolmaster's abstracted habits, that it is very doubtful whether the events which had changed the lofty but cheerful girl into the reserved, and, it might be, cold-mannered woman, had been at all noted by him. He wondered much why Joseph left his family; although he observed, with his usual simplicity, he never expected to have seen in him a careful husband: but Grace was so patient, so uncomplaining, that he believed her to be happy, and was satisfied.

"You are not going yet, my child?" said the old man, checking her affectionately, as she rose to depart.

"I must go, father; the children, you know, are alone."

"Poor things!—you ought to have brought them with you. Ah, Grace! it is very cruel of you not to come and live entirely here—it would be so much better than moping alone."

Grace smiled sorrowfully. "If I had not a home, where he could be entirely master, to receive him, you know, father, he would never return."

"And no great matter."

"Father, for shame!—he is my husband!"

"My dear child, I beg your pardon—I forgot! You are not angry?"

"No, my dear father! But it was of Abel I wished to speak, he is now twelve years old. I cannot afford, on the probability of his turning out a genius, to keep him in indolence; and

Mr. Greythorpe's gardener has offered to take him, in spring, to"——

"Take the infant from his lessons in spring!" interrupted the old man. "Why, Grace, you are not of the sound judgment you were in former times, or you would never dream of such a thing. The boy is a prodigy—there is nothing he cannot learn. I do not despair—we must never despair—of giving him such knowledge as may, in a few years, fit him, mayhap, for a college gown. Grace, Grace! you will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, if you take the child from his studies. I watch for his step—I love his voice—I feel my own youth renewed when I look upon him. You must let him 'bide with his books until his fifteenth year, at all events; and then, if he has not accomplished wonders, make him, if you will, a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water;—but you would not take from me the hope and comfort of my old age, Grace!"

"Father, believe me! Abel has no taste for books; they may constitute his pastime, but will never be his business: actual labour is the only thing for a mind like his. I cannot afford to apprentice him to a substantial trade, so let him be a husbandman—he is fond of flowers, and takes delight in curious plants: it is an innocent and sweet thing to live as a gardener, among the testimonies of God's goodness; it will employ his mind and soften his heart. I have seldom heard of one who spent his life in the pure fields, occupied in training the works of nature to perfection, who was either mean or wicked."

"It is a gentle calling, doubtless; but there are higher ones; and the 'candle,' saith the Holy Scriptures, 'must not be hid under a bushel.'"

"Well, well, sir, it is not yet spring; only, my dear father, do not let him idle when he is here: there is no peace, no honour, no prosperity, for the slothful."

"I will—I will make him industrious; he shall do six sums to-morrow in fractions, and repeat the multiplication-table as far as nine times, out of class, twice: moreover, he shall read the eighth and ninth chapters of Roman history, with questions, and write"——

"A parcel of idle ballads on the back of his exercises," interrupted poor Grace, taking up a scrawled and blotted copy-book, and smiling at the list of employments her father had marked out for her son.

"No," replied the schoolmaster, resolutely;—"no; albeit, poetry, such as Milton's, softens and elevates the mind. He shall write one copy in text, and one in small caps, and do two exercises: so that will be sufficient occupation for one day to satisfy you, Grace;—though, methinks, you might leave me to decide the quantity as well as quality of his studies."

"You are not offended with me, father?"

"Ah, no, Grace! you never, my child, gave me reason to be angry in your life; yet, when I look at you now—it is very strange—my heart grows heavy, not light. There, tie your cloak firmly, my own child; and God bless you! But, as you hope to lay your dying head on a peaceful pillow, do not send the lad away. I will make him work—indeed I will, Grace; I will take especial care that he does not idle a single minute of precious time. Your mother went first; then you deserted your father's hearth: but the child Abel—do not bereave me of him, Grace—do not leave me to say, like Jacob of old, 'If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved!'"

Grace affectionately kissed her father: and in a few minutes her hand was upon the latch of her own cottage-door. Ere she had crossed the threshold, a voice, whose tones could not be mistaken, thrilled to her heart. It was that of her husband! He was standing before the fire, holding his hands over the flame; his figure seemed more muscular than ever, but its fine proportions were lost in the appearance of increased and (if the term may be used) coarse strength. His hair hung loosely over his brows, so as to convey the idea of habitual carelessness; and his tattered garments bespoke the extreme of poverty. He turned slowly round, as the exclamation of "Mother, dear mother!" burst from the lips of Josephine, who had been gazing from a corner at her father, more than half afraid to approach him.

One look—and one only, was enough to stifle all reproach,

and stir up the affection of Grace's heart. Want was palpably stamped upon his countenance; and, as her eye glanced rapidly over his figure, she shuddered at the alteration which a few months had accomplished. For some moments neither spoke; at last, he advanced and held out his hand to her: as he walked, she perceived that his feet were shoeless and bleeding. All his faults, his cruelties, were forgotten—she only remembered that he suffered, and was her husband; and she fell upon his bosom and wept bitterly.

Whatever were the sins of Joseph Huntley, either before or after this period of his life, it is but justice to him to believe that the tears he that night mingled with his wife's were those of a contrite heart. When she asked him how and where he had spent his time during the past months, he entreated her to forbear such questions for a little while, and that then he would satisfy her: but the period never came; and the dislike he evinced to afford her any information on the subject, together with his speedy relapse into intemperate and dissolute habits, checked her inquiries, and renewed her fears for the future well-doing of her eldest son.

In the vicinity of gentlemen's seats, there are always a proportionate number of poachers; and it requires more than magisterial vigilance to restrain their devastations. Although it was impossible to fix a stigma of this kind on any particular person in the village of Craythorpe, there were two men, basket-makers by trade, who were strongly suspected of such practices. John and Sandy Smith lived together in a wretched hut on the skirts of Craythorpe Common. No one knew whence they came. Lonely and reserved in their habits, they seldom mingled with the villagers. Little children loved not their approach; and the large Newfoundland dog at "the Swinging Hen" would never form acquaintance with them or their mongrel lurcher: the latter, to confess the truth, was as reserved as his masters, and made but few friendly overtures towards the nobler animal. The only thing connected with the strangers that made a respectable appearance was a fleet and firm-footed black pony, which they maintained and treated with great care, for the

ostensible purpose of hawking their brooms through the country; but people did talk; and, indeed, it was difficult to account for various petty peculations that had occurred; or how the landlord of the same "Swinging Hen" obtained his exquisite French brandy. Grace learned with regret that an acquaintance had commenced, and quickly ripened into intimacy, between her husband and these men. Joseph was no sooner clothed, and reinstated in his humble cottage, than his bad habits returned, and his evil propensities grew stronger and stronger.

Yet the ill-temper so constantly manifested towards his wife and younger children was never extended to his eldest boy, who, happy in the removal of all restraint, and heedless of the misery his conduct inflicted on his aged grandfather, flung aside his books, and, careless of his mother's injunctions, appealed to a higher power when he was reproved for his frequently repeated faults. He galloped on the Smiths' pony, and made friends with their dog Covey; began by shooting sparrows and tit-mice with bow and arrows, and ended by bringing home a hare as a present to his mother, which she resolutely refused to dress, notwithstanding the entreaties of the son and the commands of his father.

"Did you see, or take any silver away from hence?" inquired Grace, who had been anxiously occupied in looking over her small chest of drawers.

"How could we get at the drawer, mother?" replied Abel, quickly, but reddening at the same time

"Oh, Abel!" exclaimed Josephine.

"If you have taken the money, tell the truth," enjoined his mother, in her clear, quiet voice.

Abel made a sign of silence to his little sister. "Why should I take it?" he said, sullenly, at last.

"Abel, Abel!" screamed Josephine, attempting to put her hand on his mouth at the same time, "God will hate you if you lie! I saw you take the money—all mother's white shillings; but I thought she bid you do so."

Grace turned slowly round from the table; her face was of an unearthly paleness: no word, no sound passed from between her parted lips; but she stood, like the cold fixed statue of Despair, gazing upon her children. Josephine rose, and climbing on the table, endeavoured to win her mother's attention. Gerald, the sickly brother, getting up from his chair, clasped and kissed her hand. With Abel, there was a struggle—not of long duration, but nevertheless powerful—the struggle of bad habit with good principle; the latter conquered, and he fell at his mother's feet.

"Forgive me—forgive me! God knows I am sorry. It was not for myself I took it—father told—"

"Hush!" interrupted Grace. "do not say *that* before *these*" —and she pointed to the children; adding, with great presence of mind, "It was your father's money, if it was mine, Abel; but you were wrong in not telling me of it. There, Josephine and Gerald, go into the lane, if you will; I wish to speak to your brother."

With almost inconceivable agony, this excellent woman learned that her son was far gone in falsehood. His heart was opened by the sight of his mother's distress; and it takes time to make a practised deceiver. With the earnestness of truth, he poured forth the wicked knowledge he had acquired; and Grace shuddered, while she prayed that the Almighty would watch over her son in this sore and dangerous extremity.

And now came one of her bitterest trials. She had guarded Abel from the effect of his father's sin, as an angel watches over the destinies of a beloved object,—unceasingly, but unseen. She had never alluded to her husband's faults, nor even to his unkindness, before her children; yet now the time had arrived when she must rend the veil—she must expose his shame: and to whom?—to his own son! Now it became her duty—her painful but imperative duty—to caution Abel openly against his own father—against his influences and habits; and to show the child that the parent was guiding him in the way that leadeth to destruction.

If anything like justice has been done to the development of

Grace Huntley's character, this sacrifice will be appreciated. How many a deed of unostentatious but devoted virtue is performed beneath a peasant's roof—amid the lanes and alleys of humble life, unknown to, or unheeded by, the world!

Huntley soon discovered that his wife had been influencing their child's conduct; indeed, the sacred law of truth formed so completely the basis of her words and actions that she did not attempt for a moment to conceal it.

"Then you mean to set yourself in opposition to me?" he said, all evil passions gathering at his heart and storming on his brow.

"Not to you, but to your sins, Joseph," was her meek but firm reply: whereupon he swore a bitter oath, that he would bring up his own child in the way which best suited him, and dared her interference.

"As sure as you are a living woman," he continued—with that concentrated rage which is a thousand times more dangerous than impetuous fury—"as sure as you are a living woman, you shall repent of this! I see the way to punish your wilfulness: if you oppose me in the management of my children, one by one they shall be taken from you to serve my purposes! You may look for them in vain; until (he added, with a fiendish smile) you read their names in the columns of the Newgate Calendar."

That night, as latterly had been his custom, he sallied forth about eight o'clock, leaving his home and family without food or money. The children crowded round their mother's knee to repeat their simple prayers, and retired, cold and hungry, to bed. It was near midnight ere her task was finished; and then she stole softly into her chamber, having first looked upon and blessed her treasures. Her sleep was of that restless, heavy kind, which yields no refreshment; once she was awakened by hearing her husband shut the cottage-door; again she slept, but started from a horrid dream—or was it, indeed, reality—and had her husband and her son Abel quitted the dwelling together? She sprang from her bed, and felt on the pallet—Gerald was there; again she felt—she called—she passed into the next

room—"Abel, Abel, my child! as you value your mother's blessing, speak!" There was no reply. A dizzy sickness almost overpowered her senses. Was her husband's horrid threat indeed fulfilled—and had he so soon taken their child as his participator in unequivocal sin! She opened the door, and looked out upon the night: it was cold and misty, and her sight could not penetrate the gloom. The chill fog rested upon her face like the damps of the grave. She attempted to call again upon her son, but her powers of utterance were palsied—her tongue quivered—her lips separated, yet there came forth no voice, no sound to break the silence of oppressed nature; her eyes moved mechanically towards the heavens—they were dark as the earth:—had God deserted her?—would he deny one ray, one little ray of light, to lead her to her child? Why did the moon cease to shine, and the stars withhold their brightness? Should she never again behold her boy—her first-born? Her heart swelled and beat within her bosom. She shivered with intense agony, and leaned her throbbing brow against the door-post, to which she had clung for support. Her husband's words rang in her ears—"One by one shall your children be taken from you to serve my purposes!" Through the dense fog she fancied that he glared upon her in bitter hatred—his deep-set eyes flashing with demoniac fire, and his smile, now extending, now contracting, into all the varied expressions of triumphant malignity. She pressed her hand on her eyes to shut out the horrid vision; and a prayer, a simple prayer, rose to her lips: like oil upon the troubled waters, it soothed and composed her spirit. She could not arrange or even remember a form of words; but she repeated again and again, the emphatic appeal, "Lord, save me; I perish!" until she felt sufficient strength to enable her to look again into the night. As if hope had set its beacon in the sky, calmly and brightly the moon was now shining upon her cottage. With the sudden change, at once the curse and blessing of our climate, a sharp east wind had set in, and was rolling the mist from the canopy of heaven; numerous stars were visible where, but five minutes before, all had been darkness and gloom. The shadow passed from her soul—she gazed steadily upwards—her mind

regained its firmness—her resolve was taken. She returned to her bed-room—dressed - and, wrapping her cloak closely to her bosom, was quickly on her way to the Smiths' dwelling on Craythorpe Common.

The solitary hut was more than two miles from the village; the path leading to it broken and interrupted by fragments of rocks, roots of furze, and stubbed underwood. and, at one particular point, intersected by a deep and brawling brook. Soon after Grace had crossed this stream, she came in view of the cottage, looking like a misshapen mound of earth; and, upon peering in at the window, which was only partially lined by a broken shutter, Covey, the lurcher, uttered, from the inside, a sharp muttering bark, something between reproof and recognition. There had, certainly, been a good fire, not long before, on the capacious hearth, for the burning ashes cast a lurid light upon an old table and two or three dilapidated chairs; there was also a fowling-piece lying across the table; but it was evident none of the inmates were at home; and Grace walked slowly, yet disappointedly, round the dwelling, till she came to the other side, that rested against a huge mass of mingled rock and clay, overgrown with long tangled fern and heather: she climbed to the top, and had not been many minutes on the look-out ere she perceived three men rapidly approaching from the opposite path. As they drew nearer, she saw that one of them was her husband; but where was her son? Silently she lay among the heather, fearing she knew not what—yet knowing she had much to fear. The chimney that rose from the cabin had, she thought, effectually concealed her from their view; but in this she was mistaken—for while Huntley and one of the Smiths entered the abode, the other climbed up the mound. She saw his hat within a foot of where she rested, and fancied she could feel his breath upon her cheek, as she crouched, like a frightened hare, more closely in her form; he surveyed the spot, however, without ascending further, and then retreated, muttering something about corbies and ravens; and, almost instantly, she heard the door of the hut close. Cautiously she crept down from her hiding-place; and, crawling along the ground with stealth and

silence, knelt before the little window, so as to observe, through the broken shutter, the occupation of the inmates. The dog alone was conscious of her approach; but the men were too seriously engaged to heed his intimations of danger.

Merciful powers!—had Grace Huntley suffered so long, so patiently, only to witness such a scene! She almost wished that God, in his mercy, had stricken her with blindness; she prayed for insensibility—for death—for any thing save the knowledge now imparted with such fearful truth. Would that it were a dream! But no—the horrid proofs were before her eyes—in her ears; and the one drop of comfort, the only one, was the information that her son had returned home by a shorter path—that the ruffians feared yet (oh, the import, the dreadful import, that little word carried with it!)—that they feared *yet* to trust him with all their secrets: they feared to bring him *yet* to their den.

"Then there is hope for my poor child," she thought, "and I can—I *will* save him!" With this resolve, she stole away as softly and as quickly as her trembling limbs would permit. The depredators revelled in their fancied security. The old creaking table groaned under the weight of food, and ardent spirits; and the chorus of a wild drinking song broke upon her ear as returning strength enabled her to hasten along the rude path leading to Craythorpe.

The first grey uncertain light of morning was visible through the old church-yard trees, as she came within sight of her cottage. She entered quietly, and saw that Abel had not only returned, but was sleeping soundly by his brother's side.

Grace set her house in order—took the work she had finished to her employer—came back, and prepared breakfast, of which her husband, having by this time also returned, partook. Now he was neither the tyrant whose threat still rung in her ears, nor the reckless bravo of the common; he appeared that morning, at least so his wife fancied, more like the being she had loved so fondly and so long.

"I will sleep, Grace," he said, when their meal was finished—"I will sleep for an hour; and to-morrow we shall have a better

breakfast." He called his son into the bed-room, where a few words passed between them. Immediately after, Grace went into the little chamber to fetch her bonnet. She would not trust herself to look upon the sleeper; but her lips moved as if in prayer; and even her children still remembered that, as she passed out of the cottage door, she had a flushed and agitated appearance.

"Good morning, Mrs. Huntley," said her old neighbour, Mrs. Craddock. "Have you heard the news? Ah! bad people going"—

"True, true!" replied poor Grace, as she hurried onwards, "I know—I heard it all"—

Mrs. Craddock looked after her; surprised at her abruptness.

"I was coming down to you, Grace," said her father, standing so as to arrest her progress; "I wished to see if there was any chance of the child Abel's returning to his exercises; as this is a holiday, I thought"—

"Come with me," interrupted Grace, "come with me, father; and we will make a rare holiday."

She hurried the feeble old man along the road leading to the rectory; but returned no answer to his inquiries. The servant told her, when she arrived at her destination, that his master was engaged—particularly engaged—could not be disturbed—Sir Thomas Purcel was with him; and as the man spoke, the study door opened, and Sir Thomas crossed the hall.

"Come back with me, sir!" exclaimed Grace Huntley, eagerly; "I can tell you all you want to know."

The baronet shook off the hand she had laid upon his arm, as if she were a maniac. Grace appeared to read the expression of his countenance. "I am not mad, Sir Thomas Purcel," she continued, in a suppressed, tremulous voice; "not mad, though I may be so soon. Keep back these people and return with me. Mr. Glasscott knows I am not mad."

She passed into the study with a resolute step, and held the door for Sir Thomas to enter; her father followed also, as a child traces its mother's footsteps, and looked around him, and at his

daughter with weak astonishment. One or two of the servants, who were loitering in the hall, moved as if they would have followed.

"Back, back, I say," she repeated, "I need no witnesses—there will be enough of them soon. Mr. Glasscott," she continued, closing the door, "hear me while I am able to bear testimony, lest weakness—woman's weakness—overcome me, and I falter in the truth. In the broom-sellers' cottage, across the common, on the left side of the chimney, concealed by a large flat stone, is a hole—there much of the property taken from Sir Thomas Purcel's last night is concealed."

"I have long suspected these men—Smith, I think they call themselves; yet they are but two. Now, we have abundant proof that *three* men absolutely entered the house——"

"There *was* a third," murmured Grace, almost inaudibly.

"Who?"

"My—my—my husband!" and, as she uttered the word, she leaned against the chimney-piece for support, and buried her face in her hands.

The clergyman groaned audibly; he had known Grace from her childhood, and felt what the declaration must have cost her. Sir Thomas Purcel was cast in a sterner mould. "We are put clearly upon the track, Mr. Glasscott," he said, "and must follow it forthwith; yet there is something most repugnant to my feelings in finding a woman thus herald her husband to destruction——"

"It was to save my children from sin," exclaimed Grace, starting forward with an energy that appalled them all: "God in heaven, whom I call to witness, knows, that though I would sooner starve than taste of the fruits of his wickedness, yet I could not betray the husband of my bosom to—to—I dare not think what! I tried—I laboured to give my offspring honest bread; I neither asked nor received charity; with my hands I laboured, and blessed the power that enabled me to do so. If we are poor, we will be honest, was my maxim and my boast; but he—my husband, returned; he taught my boy to lie—to steal; and when I remonstrated—when I prayed, with many tears, that he

would cease to train our—ay, *our* child for destruction, he mocked—scorned—told me that, one by one, I should be bereaved of my children, if I thwarted his purposes; and that I might seek in vain for them through the world, until I saw their names recorded in the book of shame! Gentlemen, this was no idle threat—last night Abel was taken from me"——

"I knew there must have been a fourth," interrupted Sir Thomas, coldly; "we must have the boy also secured."

The wretched mother, who had not imagined that any harm could result to her son, stood as if a thunderbolt had transfixed her—her hands clenched and extended—her features rigid and blanched — her frame perfectly erect, and motionless as a statue. The schoolmaster, during the whole of this scene, had been completely bewildered, until the idea of his grandchild's danger or disappearance, he knew not which, took possession of his mind; and filled with the single thought his faculties had the power of grasping at a time, he came forward to the table at which Mr. Glasscott was seated; and, respectfully uncovering his grey hairs, his simple countenance presenting a strong contrast to the agonized iron-bound features of his daughter, he addressed himself to the worthy magistrate:—

"I trust you will cause instant search to be made for the child Abel, whom your reverence used kindly to regard with especial favour."

He repeated this sentence at least half a dozen times, while the gentlemen were issuing orders to the persons assembled for the apprehension of the burglars, and some of the females of the family were endeavouring to restore Grace to animation. At last, Sir Thomas Purcel turned suddenly round upon Abel Darley, and in his stentorian tone, bawled out, "And who are you?"

"The schoolmaster of Craythorpe, so please you, sir—that young woman's father—and one whose heart is broken!"

So saying, he burst into tears; and his wail was very sad, like that of an afflicted child. Presently there was a stir among the

little crowd—a murmur—and then two officers ushered Joseph Huntley and his son into the apartment.

He walked boldly up to the magistrate's table, and placed his hand upon it, before he perceived his wife, to whom consciousness had not yet returned. The moment he beheld her, he started back, saying, "Whatever charge you may have against me, gentlemen, you can have none against that woman."

"Nor have we," replied Sir Thomas; "she is your accuser!"

The fine features of Joseph Huntley relaxed into an expression of scorn and unbelief. "She appear against me! Not—not if I were to attempt to murder her!" he answered, firmly.

"Grace!" exclaimed her father, joyfully, "here is the child Abel—he is found!" and seizing the trembling boy, with evident exultation, he led him to her. The effect of this act of the poor simple-minded man was electrical—the mother instantly revived, but turned her face from her husband; and, entwining her son in her arms, pressed him closely to her side. The clergyman proceeded to interrogate the prisoner; but he answered nothing, keeping his eyes intensely fixed upon his wife and child. In the meantime, the officers of justice had been prompt in the execution of their duty: the Smiths were apprehended in the village; and the greater portion of the property stolen from Sir Thomas Purcel was found in the hut where Grace had beheld it concealed.

When the preparations were sufficiently forward to conduct the unfortunate men to prison, Joseph Huntley advanced to his wife. The scornful, as well as undaunted, expression of his countenance had changed to one of painful intensity; he took her hand within his, and pressed it to his lips, without articulating a syllable. Slowly she moved her face, so that their eyes at last encountered in one long mournful look. Ten years of continued suffering could not have exacted a heavier tribute from Grace Huntley's beauty. No language can express the withering effects of the few hours' agony; her husband saw it, and felt, perhaps for the first time, how truly he had once been loved, and how much of happiness he had sacrificed to sin.

"'Twas to save my children!" was the only sentence she uttered, or rather murmured; and it was the last coherent one she spoke for many weeks. Her fine reason seemed overwhelmed. It was a sight few could witness without tears. The old father, tending the couch of his afflicted daughter, would sit for hours by her bedside, clasping the child Abel's hand within his, and every now and then shaking his head when her ravings were loud or violent.

About fifteen years after these distressing events had agitated the little village of Craythorpe, an elderly woman, of mild and cheerful aspect, sat calmly reading a large volume she supported against the railing of a noble vessel that was steering its course from the shores of "Merrie England," to some land far over sea. The ocean was calm and clear—so very calm that it reflected, as if from a solid surface, every vapour that floated along the heavens; it was like sailing into a new world—a creation whose laws and boundaries must remain for ever unknown to us. How exciting to imagination! So many fantastic forms revelled beneath the transparent crystal, huge rocks looking like castles, exaggerated by the watery distance; bleak Alpine landscapes stretching far away; and then the monsters of the deep moving in the solemn majesty of silence!—living things, without one sympathy for the earth about them; without a single feeling that we can comprehend!—it may be, if our eyes do not weary, that, in fancy, we gaze deeper down, and strange unearthly forms are succeeded by deeps on deeps—the very eternity of waters!—where we can see nothing but the blue abyss!—down—down—down! It is a fearful thing to pass over their mysteries—a great lesson—this teaching us how little we really know of what exists around us—of the marvels that "compass us in on every side,"—of the mighty miracles that are working day by day, night by night, in the infinity of space. Many of the passengers on board this vessel laughed and talked, and speculated on the future, as if they already grasped the wealth of the new world, or had

altogether forgotten the old: the solitary woman continued to read, and yet there was a sweetness and forbearance in the expression of her countenance, which gave assurance that she would close her book and reply, if any chose to question or speak to her. Two gentlemen, who were lounging on the quarter-deck, arm-in-arm, frequently passed her. The elder, in a peculiarly kind tone of voice, said, "You bear the voyage well, dame!"

"Thank God, yes, sir!"

"Ah! you will soon wish yourself back in Old England."

"I did not wish to leave it, sir; but duty compelled me."

The gentlemen walked on.

"Who is she?" inquired the younger.

A very singular woman. Her information transported for life a husband whom she loved, notwithstanding his crimes. She had, at that time, three children, and the eldest had already become contaminated by his father's example. She saw nothing but destruction for them; her warnings and entreaties being alike unregarded: so she made her election—sacrificed the husband, and saved the children!"

"But what does she here?"

"Her eldest son is now established in a small business, and respected by all who know him; her second boy, and a father whom her misfortunes reduced to a deplorable state of wretchedness, are dead; her daughter, a village belle and beauty, is married to my father's handsome new parish-clerk; and Mrs. Huntley, having seen her children provided for, and by her virtues and industry made respectable in the Old World, is now on her voyage to the New, to see, if I may be permitted to use her own simple language, 'whether she can contribute to render the last days of her husband as happy as the first they passed together.' It is only justice to the criminal to say, that I believe him truly and perfectly reformed."

"And on this chance she leaves her children and her country?"

"She does! She argues that, as the will of Providence prevented her from discharging her duties *together*, she must endea-

vour to perform them *separately*. He was sentenced to die; but, by my father's exertions, his sentence was commuted to one of transportation for life; and I know she has quitted England without the hope of ever again beholding its white cliffs."

THE WIFE OF TWO HUSBANDS.

"HOW high he mounts! Hark, Henry; we hear him still. Sure, then, I can fancy that bird like Hope, soaring—soaring – till he reaches Heaven"—

"Which he will never do;" responded Henry O'Donnell to his fair cousin. "Do you not see that hawk, tracing its pathway through the clouds as the greyhound tracks the hare upon the earth?" Marian shaded her deep blue eyes from the rays of the glorious sun. The song of the bird had ceased, as it changed its course, descending towards the meadows for the safety which the skies denied it. "What a glorious chase!" observed the young sportsman, as he watched the issue.

"Fire, fire, dear Harry!" exclaimed Marian. "Ah! do now! the monster gains upon the bird; do fire."

"Nay, Marian, you know not what sport is," replied the youth, coolly, and slowly raising his piece. "What a noble bird he is! 'Tis a pity to bring him down till the chase is ended."

"Fire, Harry, fire," interrupted Marian; "oh fire! There now, dear, *dear* Harry. Oh! the poor lark is struck. Fire, fire, if you love me!"

Quick as lightning the mandate of death sent the hawk tumbling through the air; and almost at the same moment, the little singing bird, wounded and struggling, fell on the grassy turf at the maiden's feet.

"Had you fired sooner the lark would have been saved!" she exclaimed, tenderly taking it in her hand. "Now—it will never sing again!—its nest, too, I know is in the furze. What will become of its poor mate?—Alas! my simile was indeed naught—how unlike Hope is this dying bird!"

Many tears flowed over Marian Raymond's blooming cheek as she watched the last agonies of the woodlark: Harry would have taken it from her, but she retained it to the last, and then raising a portion of the turf, placed it in its rest. The tears of youth are easily excited, and flow—without long gathering in their shining fountains. Their source, at the time of sorrow, seems inexhaustible;—yet they soon cease. April's sunshine and showers convey but little idea of the rapid succession of smiles and tears on a cheek that has only numbered sixteen summers. Marian, shaking back the raven curls that clustered over her white forehead, looked into her cousin's face, as cheerfully as if she had never known a moment's grief.

"When I go to England, and join my regiment, Marian," said Henry, as they proceeded homeward to Castle Raymond, "you will not, I hope, forget me,—years *must* pass ere I return—but you will still think of me, and be my little wife—will you not?"

Marian held down her beautiful head, and made no reply.

"I wish you would promise never to love but me, and then I

should go gladly to the wild wars, and return—a general and a hero."

"Return a hero, Harry, and I shall be satisfied."

"No, Marian—a general for your sake—a hero for my own."

"Selfish boy!—so you prefer the greater glory for yourself."

"Not so; but you must never be a poor man's wife! Young as I am, I know enough of human nature to see that you will be courted—admired—flattered—and all more for your beauty than your fortune; although you are an heiress."

A peculiar expression of scorn, amounting almost to bitterness, curled the maiden's lip, as she repeated—"Heiress!—Oh, yes—I shall doubtless be an heiress; but what, Harry, what shall I inherit! right noble blood—the cold-hearted cannot expel that from my veins; a spotless name—no act but mine own can tarnish that. What else?—Alas! Harry, the mouldering walls of yonder castle, which to my ancestors was indeed a tower of strength, is now but a fitting abode for the wilder inhabitants of earth and air. My father, with that improvidence which you tell me characterises the Irish nation, has never retrenched a single expenditure, even since the Ballamoyle estate was irrecoverably mortgaged—and at this moment I know he is pressed by incumbrances on every side."

"An English gentleman, if so circumstanced, would sell off a part to clear that which remained."

Marian shook her head.—"Dwelling so much among the English lately, Harry, has made you alien to our feelings and our customs: here I stand, the last descendant of the house of Raymond; the hills of four counties, that were ours, are in sight; two bright and fertilizing rivers paid us tribute; and many hundred men followed us, when needed, in camp and field:—behold to what a handful our property, or, what is nominally our property, is reduced! the birch wood to the left—the ruins of Castle Cloyne, with its almost deserted village, to the right—the black bog, stretching in sluggish sloth along yonder hollow—and my own beloved mouldering castle, with its suffocated moat, its broken windows, its crumbling walls, and its

ivy towers: which, of all the objects I have mentioned, could my father part with?"

"Sir Charles Barnett's agent is instructed to give any sum your father thinks fit to demand for Castle Raymond."

"And has the Sassenach" — exclaimed the proud Irish girl, who not ten minutes before was weeping, as if her heart would break, over a stricken lark—"has he presumed thus to insult us? If the paltry Englishman were but here, I would look him into dust, and"—

"Ashes," interrupted her companion, with a want of tact that paid no respect to her excited feelings. "My dear Marian, when I am a general, you shall come with me to England, where they value warm commodious houses more than they do old castles, and—but you are not angry with me again, sweet girl? Surely you know I would not willingly cause you a moment's pain; although I lament—lament most deeply, that your wild enthusiasm and uncalculating habits will lead—to much misery."

"Thank you for your prophecy, Henry."

"Dearest Marian,—I have named your only fault—and what a host of virtues do you possess to counterbalance that, which experience will soon eradicate—leaving you all perfection!"

"It is strange," replied Marian, after a pause, and with that delightful *naïveté* which fades from the heart as the blush from the cheek, with this sad difference, that when once departed, the blush returns, the feeling—never; "it is very strange, that, while you see so many faults in me, I think you perfect—you are certainly much wiser—and I know that, when you go, I shall want a friend so much!—there's my dear father—he *is* my friend, of course—yet he talks of nothing but Oliver Cromwell and the battle of the Boyne—the bane and glory of our ancestors—and—I may say it to you, Harry, who know him so well—drinks so much, that he is no *heart*-friend for a girl like me."

"Am I a *heart*-friend, Marian?"

"Be easy, do.—Then my poor nurse!—she tells such delightful fairy tales—but the worst of it is that the half of them are made up."

"I should think they were."

"Now, Harry, don't teaze me.—I assure you, Nurse Grady's mother saw—why, I declare, there goes Busca hot-foot after the grey cat!"

"And there goes Marian Raymond after both," soliloquised Henry O'Donnell; "blessed, blessed girl!—tenderness, love, pride, and gaiety of soul and spirit, free from every taint of evil, dwell together in that noble breast: would that I could call you all mine own—I wish you had not the reputation of wealth, for then even now you might be a soldier's bride—and, if so wedded, how quickly could I win a way to riches and to honour!"

The youth folded his arms over his gun across his breast, and leaned against a noble oak, which the lightning of by-gone years had despoiled of its topmost branches. It was a fine contrast—the tree, magnificent in decay, scorning in its greatness the very power which had levelled its antlers to the green and humble plain; and the youth, whose dark eye drank in the rays of the setting sun, and whose erect and finely proportioned figure told of prowess of no common order. Youth and age are, either in the natural or the moral world, the most interesting stages of existence; middle-age is too worldly-minded—too busied with thought and occupation—too well able to take care of itself—to create the sympathy we feel for the young and the very old; we look on the former with hope, on the latter with veneration; we pray for both, and feel equal interest in the sunrise and sunset of life.

Henry O'Donnell was rich in all things but the gifts of fortune; he had been brought up by Marian's father as his own child, and the old gentleman had used his interest to get him educated and provided for in the only profession which, according to his theory, a gentleman could enter. Mr. Raymond was one of the few survivors of a race of Irish country-gentlemen now, I believe, extinct He was tall and handsome, though his countenance expressed bravery, generosity, and good temper, rather than intellect or observation; his forehead was high, but not broad; and his eyes large and lustrous, but deficient in expres-

sion; he was, even in advanced life, a great adept in all sports connected with flood and field—kept a flight of hawks and the best fox-hounds in the county—until literally obliged to part, before he mortgaged his best estate, with his splendid pack, from inability to support them. So he gave them away, and hunted no more: poor Marian used to say, he broke his heart when the plough broke up his dog-kennel; and I believe she was right—he certainly drank more claret after dinner than when he followed the hounds; and when his wine-merchant objected to his having any more pipes of that regal wine, because his bill had not been paid for more than eight years, Mr. Raymond chastised him severely for his insolence; and to punish him more effectually, vowed a vow, which he religiously kept, never to drink any thing in future but whiskey punch. Of this most wicked beverage he certainly drank enough; and as it invariably weakens the intellect, and excites a temporary madness when indulged in, the old gentleman, kind, considerate, and affectionate in the morning, became proud, tyrannical, almost brutal in the evening. No wonder poor Marian should regret her cousin's departure; the little acquaintance she had with books and accomplishments, she owed to Henry O'Donnell. Henry invariably strung her harp, and corrected her drawings. Her companions were few, and unsuited to her tastes and feelings; she was refined both by nature and habit—for her father, with all his peculiarities, had a just idea of female propriety. Mr. Raymond's politics were stern and unbending; offensive from their violence, even to his own party, and, of course, calculated to make him bitter enemies among those of opposite opinions. Descended from a line of ancestors who had ever directed their minds to the arrangements of the national affairs, while their own were considered perfectly beneath their notice, the last of the name inherited the prejudices and habits of his progenitors without their wealth; and truly had Marian pointed out to her cousin the narrow boundaries of their once wide estates. Notwithstanding his habits, his eccentricities, and his increasing embarrassments, there were many who venerated and esteemed his good qualities. The Irish peasantry, with all their cunning and

many faults, are, in heart and practice, the most generous people on the face of the earth—poverty with them is no sin.

"Shane," exclaimed a poor woman to her husband, as the master of Castle Raymond, but indifferently mounted, passed up the hill of Cloyne, "run out agra!—here, put on yer hat, Shane, that ye may have the satisfaction of pulling it off to a real gintleman—and Shane, take the childer out wid ye—now mind yer bows and yer curtsies, ye pack o' gaffers; always pay respect to dacent blood; it's but little of it's going these bad times, and more's the pity. Thank God and the Vargin, we want nothing from his honour—but *it's a grate satisfaction to oneself to show proper respect to the gintry*, especially when they're down in the world." Mr. Raymond passed on, after exchanging salutations with the peasant, and praising his children. "His honour's not like himself, somehow," continued the loquacious dame; "they say he can't keep on the ould castle, and that the rain comes in through the roof,—and Nurse Grady tells nothing, barring a word now and then—she's desperate cute—only I think by her that Miss Marian is over fond of her cousin, and her cousin of her; and if so, I don't see why they shouldn't be married at once; if they wait to get rich, they may wait long enough; *and, sure, two can battle the poverty better nor one.*" This is the Irish maxim, and *much* of Irish misery can be traced to its influence; the perfect heedlessness with which the poor unite hands and hearts has its origin in this pernicious belief. Her husband perfectly agreed with his wife, although both were suffering from the effects of the evil principle; and he contented himself with adding, "It is enough to make his honour look quare, to have that English Sir Charles Barnett coming here on a visit to his agent, with his dogs, and his horses, and his sarvents, like the Lord Mayor o' Dublin, Nelly, kivered with goold and silver, and his outriders, and all in the teeth of the counthrey—and he nothing but a bit of a banker—a pen-cutter, after all. Blessed Mary! if here an't the whole gang of them coming up the hill, as sure as my name's Shane Fayley."

"And sure, ye'r not going to salute the likes o' him," ex-

claimed Nelly; "come in doors, do—here, Paddy, Norry, Looney. Katty, Kelly, every child o' ye, whether mine or not, come off the dunghill, every one o' ye, and in wid ye—sorra a bow or a scrape shall ye ever make to them that's beneath ye. There, Katty! if you want to see the fine coach, bad luck to it! pull the lock of straw out of the ind windey, and ye'll have the sight and the dust together. The poor young lady's the most to be pitied; she's had no mother over her for many a long year—babbies dear, what would ye do without your mammy?" And the "*babbies*," fat, rosy, dirty brats, kissed their mother with more pure affection than the pink-lipped, well-bred offspring of the great and wealthy deem it right to evince towards their courtly parents.

If Nelly Ryley did not possess philosophy, she was gifted with forethought; "the poor young lady" *was* the most to be pitied, because she had imbibed correct and just notions, that enabled her to see the error of her father's ways, without possessing the power either to alter or improve them. Her calm and beautiful mother, whose portrait smiled so placidly upon her from the cold and mouldering wall of their spacious and dreary reception-room, had taken all things tranquilly; she loved her husband, and believed that whatever he did was necessary to support his dignity. An English lady so situated, would have considered her life a life of trial; but Mrs. Raymond took it for granted that tradespeople who dunned, were very impertinent, and deserved punishment instead of pay; that it was not at all wrong for Mr. Raymond to drink claret to excess, because all gentlemen did the same; that it would be exceedingly mean to keep, much less investigate accounts; and that the *entrée* at "The Castle," and four greys to draw her through the beautiful woods of her domain, formed the summit of human happiness. Her body was as fragile as her mind; she died one summer morning in consequence of taking a cold bath instead of a warm one, and her husband drank a double quantity of claret during the next three months, for sorrow that she had departed, leaving him a daughter and not a son. Many wondered he did not marry again, and it was reported that he had proposed in a very

high quarter, and been refused :—be that as it may, from the day she entered her teens, Marian Raymond had been considered and treated as the mistress of Raymond Castle.

It was about two years after the stricken lark died upon her hand, that Marian was seated near a small table which supported her father's elbow; the evening sun had not set, and its beams scattered a variety of tints over the antique room, whose furniture, time-worn and moth-eaten, showed harshly in the garish light: the shadows on the wall looked strange and uncouth, and the noble old greyhound, crouching at his master's feet, gazed with "lack lustre eye" up to the face of his young mistress. Poor Busca had long been blind, but the creature's fidelity was all the same; and if he had lost one sense in the service to which he was so ardently devoted, he gave to the other four work in proportion to make up for the deficiency. He was swift of foot as ever, his scent as keen, and his hearing as perfect, as when, in his younger days, he accompanied his friend Harry along the vales and over the mountains of Kerry. Marian sat near the table, on which were placed the ordinary "materials" for the manufacture of punch, but they remained untouched, and the master of Raymond's head leaned upon his bosom; Marian's eyes were glazed within their sockets, from whence they looked straight out upon the landscape, without, it would seem, the power of noting herb, or tree, or flower; her hands and arms rested on her lap, and the paper she had been reading lay at her feet; her luxuriant hair burst from the light blue riband that had confined its abundance, and fell in rich shadowy masses over her neck and shoulders—every feature told that she had received a sudden and fearful shock, and her cheek and lips were as white as monumental marble.

The father and daughter continued in this state of intense agony for nearly an hour, when the old oak door creaked upon its hinges, and Marian's nurse entered. In conformity with an Irish custom still venerated, she had remained in the house since her young lady's birth, the plague and amusement of the servants, and the humble companion, confidant, and adviser of her mistress.

"Och wirrasthrou! and is it thrue? Och, Miss Machree, is it the thruth intirely, that the young masther's gone from us?—I can't belave the postman's news—and, sure, the whole kitchen's in a flood o' tears, and everything in the house broken-hearted. Oh, tell me, Miss, honey, if indeed it's on the paper that Master Harry's missing!"

Still Marian remained as before; and Mr. Raymond made no reply.

"Och, ma vourneen, you are, Miss Marian! Ah! then, put the stare out of your beautiful eyes, and spake to your poor nurse—sure you're the only comfort I have now in the wide world—Masther, spake to her, she'll mind you," continued the affectionate creature, really alarmed at the rigidity and coldness of the hand which she clasped to her bosom,—"Masther, Masther! Miss Marian's dying—Och, wisha, wisha, you poor stupid ould jintleman!" she added, in an under tone, "What will I do?—Busca, Busca! you baste, if you war not blind you'd call her to yourself, and lick her face, and howl; for, sure, its good rason you have, and yer young master dead." The poor animal, as if understanding her appeal, raised itself on his hind legs, placed its fore-paws on Marian's lap, and, turning its sightless eyes upwards, uttered a howl so piteous and so mournful, that Mr. Raymond started from his stupor, and half rose from his seat. The creature, when its wail was ended, first licked the hands of its mistress, and placing its face next hers, uttered a low moaning caressing noise, applying its cold nose to her cheek, with a tenderness which, of all the brute creation, dogs largely possess. This succeeded in rousing her paralysed feelings—she folded her arms round the animal's neck, and, bursting into a torrent of tears, exclaimed, "Your poor master, Busca!"

"Take away these things, Nurse Grady, and don't let any one but yourself wait upon us this evening," said Mr. Raymond, as the twilight deepened.

"But, sir, honey, you haven't so much as wet your lips with the punch!" replied the nurse in astonishment, seeming to think by this sign, that he must be ill indeed. "Sure you'll go to

the bad intirely with the grief, if you don't take a drop now and agin."

"I shall do that whether or no," replied the old gentleman, faintly smiling; "no, nurse, I have much to say, much to do to-night, and it must be said one time or another."

"The only drop o'comfort for us all now is, that he may have been taken prisoner," said Nurse Grady.

"He was too brave for that," murmured Marian, in one of those low whispers that thrill to the very heart—"too—all too brave—I might have known it—and often did I pray to the God of battles to protect"——. Her voice died away, and though her utterance was imperfect, still her cousin's name mingled with the tears that came to the relief of her bursting heart.

"Let her talk—let her talk—it will do her good—it does good to man or woman, but especially to woman. Och, but her throuble is grate, and no wonder. Oh, sir, sir, honey, to think he was reared for the slaughter!" said Nurse Grady.

The accounts were but too correct. No trace of Harry O'Donnell had been discovered after the fatal battle of Albuera, though a friend, a young ensign, who was by his side during the engagement, had searched for his body in every direction, and though he distinctly recognised the spot where, in the act of encouraging his men, the gallant fellow had been cut down by a French sabre.

To poor Marian it was indeed a bitter trial; and though in after-life she encountered many afflictions, none struck her so heavily as this; he was her first, her only affection—in childhood she had loved him as a brother, and time had knit their hearts with love; to him all her hopes were directed—he was the planet round which all her affections, all her thoughts revolved. Her father had noted the growing attachment, but considered it a mere juvenile feeling which a little time and experience would destroy. He had some prudential thoughts, as regarded his daughter's future establishment, and trusted to time and absence,—and chance—to wear it out. Harry O'Donnell, his step-sister's child, with nothing but his sword to win his way to glory, could neither retrieve the Raymond

estates from jeopardy, nor add new honours to the name: he had, therefore, made up his mind to regard and to serve Harry as a nephew, never as a son; and was greatly shocked at perceiving the effect produced on his daughter by the account of his death. Though he sorrowed much, he was perplexed and sorely tormented at the knowledge, which broke upon him for the first time, that Marian really loved her cousin—loved him with the deep and intense love which dies but with the heart. The master of Castle Raymond was but little skilled in human nature, or he would have known that it would have been far better to have suffered Marian's feelings to calm down into something like resignation before he spoke to her of any future plans, and, above all, of the possibility of her forming another attachment; but he fancied that the present was the best, and, moreover, he had dispensed with his accustomed beverage, and was not willing to run the risk of keeping a cool head for two nights, when the sacrifice of *one* to the god of temperance might surely be deemed sufficient. Under any circumstances he would have mourned more deeply for his nephew, though it must be confessed that the young man's English habits and independent ideas jarred much with the old gentleman's preconceived and hereditary notions:—a certain fearlessness of character having rendered poor Harry less careful of wounding his uncle's prejudices than was consistent with his own interests.

"Perhaps, my dear Marian," commenced Mr. Raymond, "perhaps I had better not mention our affairs this evening, although they concern me so very nearly."

"I will listen now, dearest father—now, or at any time, to aught that affects you. Busca—poor Busca—here, rest your head upon my lap—*his* hand will never caress you more!"

"Where is the spaniel—the pretty Blenheim—Sir Charles Barnett sent you, Marian? it is a fitter pet, I think, than that great hound."

Marian looked in her father's face, as if doubtful that she heard aright, and while her pale cheek crimsoned, made no reply, but by pressing her lips on the dog's head.

"My dear child, I have this day fathomed what I could not

before understand; the cause of your coolness to Sir Charles Barnett—a gentleman—an *English* gentleman, to be sure, but still a gentleman, and, I must say, a man of liberal feelings—a man of sound political views, too—never contradicted me in his life: poor dear Harry would always have an opinion of his own! But Sir Charles is a steady man, of good family, too, in its way, and old enough to take care of the main chance; rich as a Jew, and not purse-proud, wishing, as you know, our families to be united, which proves his respect for ancestry, and, I must confess, make me respect him in return." He paused for a reply, but Marian offered no observation, her lips still rested upon the brow of the noble hound, and Mr. Raymond continued—"I suppose some girlish and boyish engagement passed between you and Harry?"

Another pause, and no reply.

"Then, I must say, I think it was very dishonourable of him to"—

"Father!" interrupted Marian, springing on her feet in an instant, and clasping her hands with startling energy—"Father, name not him and dishonour in the same breath—purify your heart and lips from such a conception and such an utterance. Dishonour and Henry O'Donnell were never before blended. And you, too, who so well knew him, within these walls, in this very room, where so often he has corrected my faults, and directed my wandering thoughts to the right path—these walls to hear the blasphemy of that dear name—!" Then, as if thinking that to her father she had said too much, the poor girl threw herself at his feet, and bending her head to the earth, sobbed out a petition that he would retract his words, and forgive the agony which drove her to such extremes.

Mr. Raymond folded her to his bosom, greatly shocked at a violence he had so little anticipated; and said everything that occurred to him to convince her he meant nothing that could sully O'Donnell's reputation in the least.

"We will talk of this another time, my child," he said, tenderly; "but it must be soon, very soon, Marian—very soon, or

you will see your father within the county gaol, a prisoner—a prisoner, Marian, for paltry debts."

She pressed her hands to her forehead, and at last murmured, "Father! I understand you now—and now I cannot bear more—not to-night, but to-morrow, father—to-morrow, or the next day. God help me, and direct me for the best. Good night, dear father! You believe that he was incapable of a dishonourable thought, and you forgive my petulance. Now bless me, father—bless me, for I have need of blessing." She sank on her knees, and her unhappy and ruined parent pronounced as fervent a blessing as ever passed from human lips

"Do not think of a gaol, father. What have I to live for now?"

As she passed from the apartment, the little spaniel, Sir Charles's present, met her at the door, and fawned upon her, as was his custom, for all things loved her well: she spurned him from her, and the creature ran yelling through the hall; the sound smote upon her ear. "God forgive me!" she ejaculated; "Satan is busy at my heart." She crossed the vestibule; the rusty armour, and the disarranged fishing and other sporting implements, appeared dropping from the neglected walls; the splendid lamp, which had once shed its many-coloured light over the marble pavement, hung broken and dangling from the painted and cobwebbed ceiling; the spacious fireplace, round which a hundred followers had often crouched, exhibited rusty bars, and broken fragments of stone; and as she passed it, the bright and glittering eyes of a starved rat, that had been prowling for prey, glared upon her with their poisoning light: she shuddered with superstitious dread from the influence of the unclean animal; nor did she breathe freely until, standing on the green slope leading to the castle gardens, she fixed a long and piercing gaze upon the blue sky, studded with its starry worlds: there was *his* planet, glorious among the many, shining in its white raiment of brilliant light—fully and splendidly shining, not beneath a cloud, but standing out in the heavens, as if in triumph! Will poor Marian be accused of weak-mindedness if it be confessed that the brightness of the star communicated

hope to her heart? She wandered among the tangled plantations, with her eyes still fixed upon the shining orb, until she found herself on the moor beyond the gardens. Her foot struck against a mound of earth; and when she looked down, she found herself on the very spot where she had placed the dead lark beneath the turf. After that little incident, with girlish romance, she had planted two white rose-trees on the tiny grave, to prove, as she laughingly assured her cousin, her theory to be correct; for the spirit of the lark would mingle with the perfume of the roses, and teach them to mount the skies. Harry too smiled at, if not with, her. The rose-trees grew and flourished; and now, in the decline of summer, the grass was strewed with their white leaves: she stooped to see if one remained that she could gather; and when she raised her head, she saw that the white clouds, which had been careering, like the sea-foam, through the heavens, had obscured the brightness of his natal star!—it was too much for her excited imagination, and she sunk upon the spot where, two years before, her hopeful emblem had met with an untimely end. Let no one make sport of youthful sorrow—it is the bitterest we are doomed to endure in our course through life; the trials of after-age are, doubtless, more real. but they are not so intense—they are of the world, worldly; it is seldom they are unselfish—rarely untutored. Let any of us recall the devotedness of our first *real* grief, the anguish of our first *real* disappointment, and remember how literally it was deep and heartfelt—how entirely mind and body were stricken during its continuance; and then, in justice to fast coming memories, we can never make sport of early sorrowings.

"And here you are, *a-lannan*, and your beautiful hair wet wid the night dew—after myself and the whole house seeking for ye, in every hole and corner, up and down, in and out. What brcught you here intirely? Och, my grief! Come in, *Astore ma chree*, and go into your comfortable bed; and don't take on so, though grate is your throuble: sure, darlint, we are born, all of us, without asking our laves, and we die—rich and poor, grate and small—in the same way. Och, *a-coushla!* it's a grief to my heart that you war not brought up in the thrue religion—

for, sure, a trifle of patters and avys would make ye so comfortable! The master thinks you asleep, and niver a wink on yer eye, no more than on the lady moon, who's blessing us with her light. Maybe, after all, he's not dead—who knows?—but a little time will tell!"

A little time and a long time passed, and told nothing—nothing was heard of Harry O'Donnell. His companions in arms had ceased to think of him—his uncle wished to forget he had ever existed—the old nurse even had taken the hue and character of the time, and spoke of him no more. Autumn with its golden sceptre tinged the woods with divers and magnificent colours—the swallows had deserted their haunts by the tranquil lake and the wooded hills—the song of the reaper, and the glad whistle of the blithesome blackbird, no longer danced amid the valleys. Winter came, stealthily at first, sprinkling the earth with frosty diamonds, and nipping the young buds that ventured forth from their mystic inclosures—then, in his ice-car, he mounted the hurricane, and capped the mountains with his snows. Spring—lovely, all-healing Spring—with its young sunshine, and gentle showers, succeeded; the hills were green, the violets blue, the cowslips mingled their blossoms with the furze, the golden catkins hung from the birchin woods, over the blossoms of the timid and trembling anemone; the fly-away birds came back to their old habitations with unsoiled wings and unruffled plumage, as if they had never wandered,—

> "The elm tree blossomed o'er the brooding bird,
> And wild and wide the plover's wail was heard."

The seasons had changed; but in Marian Raymond there was no change, "neither shadow of turning."—Did I say, no change? I did her injustice; her beautiful head, which at first had been bowed to the earth, had risen into an erect and statue-like dignity, as she had said—"Here I and sorrow sit." She had learned, from commune with her noble self, to meet, not sink

beneath, her destiny; her cheek had settled into extreme paleness, and her eye gained in strength what it lost in brightness. The summer had seen her a wild, ardent, confiding girl; the succeeding spring found her a cold-mannered dignified woman, whose lips were rarely known to smile, and in whose eyes no tears were ever *seen;* yet she loved Henry as deeply and as tenderly as ever—in that one sentiment she was unchanged.

"And they all seemed to love him too," she exclaimed, in the solitude of her dreary chamber; "I thought it was real, and that they would have laid down life for Harry; yet but one remembers him besides myself—his poor, poor dog!"

"Och, Mistress Grady! an' I'm heart glad to see ye," said Nelly Riley of Cloyne. "Sit down, ma'am—and is it thrue that your Miss is to be married, after all, to that English barrow-night, who's 'ould enough to be her father, and has nothin' in him but the spirit of a tame nigger?—he'd take a penny out of a blind man's hat!"

"Indeed, then, Nelly Riley, I take it to be an ill patthern of your manners to say the likes o' that to one who's coming into our family, and has good blood in his veins; sure, then, ye little know what he'd do for the sake of the young Mistress."

"Maybe I do know, Mrs. Grady; don't I know how (God look down upon her!) she's been drooping all the winther; don't I know how the heart-faver came upon her, a laughing girl, and left her a sober heart-struck woman; don't all the counthrey know how the poor Masther (more's the pity!) has been distressed; don't we know how the jaws of the law (*bad luck to it!*) has been stretched open for him; and don't we see that he's stuffing his daughter betwixt to stop its mouth? Sure, everybody in his whole town-land knows that Sir Charles wanted to buy the estate long ago. and has money enough in the Limerick bank, and the Waterford bank, and the big bank in Dublin, to say nothing of his outlandish banks, to buy fifty estates like it; but he wanted the lady too, for he could get nothing in England

like her—the ould, dressed up, buckram-stiffened, face-painted dandy. You needn't grizzle, like a pea on a griddle, Mrs. Grady, it's the truth I'm tellin', and I don't care who hears it! but this I know, if the poor young gintleman hadn't been killed, she'd ha' seen Castle Raymond down the Shannon (and my blissing to her for that same!) before she'd ha' sould herself to that English thingumby, you call barrow-night."

"You're a blasphaming ould woman, to talk that way of Castle Raymond, and you're a poor desaved craythur, too; for I can tell ye, that though Sir Charles is an Englishman, (which counthrey, you'll agree, is preferable before the world, afther Ireland,) he has a generous spirit of his own, when there is occasion for it."

"I see how it is, nurse, and why yer two good-looking shoulders stick out so grand, under yer beautiful Injee shawl; but I'd scorn to be bribed, poor as I am; and, remimber I tell ye, that though grand she may be, rich she may be, yet ye'll niver see the smile on her lip so bright, or her step so dancing, as when she went wandering, like a blessed bird over these hills, with him whose grave was made, without cross or prayer to mark it, in a far counthrey."

"Nelly," replied Nurse Grady, "you're not a larned woman, so I can't blame ye; but you may take the word of one who knows better than yourself what belongs to the quality, and she tells ye, that Miss Marian will be as happy as the day is long—and why not? Won't she ha' got a rich husband; won't she ha' saved Castle Raymond from being sould; and sure you know that if iver that came to pass, it would be the ould gentleman's death; won't she" ——

"Don't bother us, axing yer pardon, nurse; haven't I got the sight o' my eyes, and the feelings o' my heart—and don't I see how it is?"

Nelly Riley was right; the pulse of Marian Raymond's heart was chilled. Sir Charles Barnett had been a leader of fashion, when fashion and vice were even more synonymous than in our own days. He had drank and gamed in royal company. He was still brilliant and most elegant in his manners, but he was no

longer supreme in matters of taste and ton; younger men were preferred, by the new beauties, and Sir Charles sought retirement on his Irish estates, to recruit both health and purse. An old uncle died suddenly, and left him the reversion of immense wealth. He longed again to dazzle and to lead; but he felt and knew that, except as a dinner-giver, his reign was over:—a man may give dinners at any age; but at any age he cannot waltz, sing, and flirt with ladies who have succeeded their mammas in the empire of fashion. He had ever eschewed matrimony, for reasons which it is needless to explain; but the radiant and dazzling beauty of Marian Raymond attracted his notice. He perceived immediately, with the quickness of a man of the world, that she would create a sensation; her *naïveté*, her wit, could have no rivals—her beauty, few. When first he saw her she had scarcely numbered fifteen summers, and then he introduced himself to Mr. Raymond by offering to purchase the castle and grounds. This was received as an insult by the proud, though needy proprietor, and it subsequently required all Sir Charles Barnett's tact to gain the good graces of the master of Raymond. He succeeded, as we have seen, effectually; for Mr. Raymond had only told his daughter the truth when he affirmed, that her accepting Sir Charles's hand was the only way to save him from a gaol. Poor girl! she saw that indeed her father's hour was come, as well as her own, and she agreed—only stipulating that she was not to be called upon to fulfil her contract until the following summer. Sir Charles certainly acted with great liberality, paid off all incumbrances, and was recognized as the heir to Castle Raymond after the present possessor's death. A maddening fever was the result of this self-sacrifice, and Sir Charles might have repented (for with her characteristic nobility of soul she told him all the truth), had he not consoled himself with the idea, that as her lover was dead it was of no consequence; every one, he believed, must have a first love before a second, and its memory would pass from her mind as clouds from the summer sky.

"I am come, father—Marian Raymond is come to demand, for the *last time*, her father's blessing."

. Her father was alone in his chamber, but a joyous bridal-party crowded the saloon.

"For the *last* time, my girl! What do you mean?"

"After this morning there will be no Marian Raymond."

"Ah! my dear, I wish you had been a boy—and yet I do not—but, though not Marian Raymond, you are my daughter still. Ah! well may he be proud of you!"—

"I am adorned, you see, father, for the sacrifice."

"Sacrifice, do you call it?" he replied—"say, rather, for the festival."

"Be it so—there is some country, I think—though I cannot tell where, which *he* used to speak of, where they made the sacrifice a festival. But you will be happy, father—you will enjoy, long, long enjoy, dear Castle Raymond."

"So I will—that rascally wine-merchant, Marian, has been writing to me to get back my custom; but not a drop of his claret shall ever enter my cellars—no, no; when you return you will hardly know the old place."

"Father, grant me one request—the fishing tackle, and Harry's old fowling-piece—he hung them on the walls himself, where they now are—*do not let them be removed.*"

Mr. Raymond pressed his daughter's hand in silence.

"When I return, father, I hope I shall find you happy:—what I do to-day, is for you only."

"Happy! how can I be otherwise, my Marian? I never felt better in my life—never in better health or spirits."

He led her into the saloon; and soon after a gay cavalcade passed through the motley crowd to the village church—they entered its ivy-garnished portal—the ceremony commenced—proceeded—concluded. It was observed afterwards by many, that when the clergyman demanded—"Who gives this woman to be the wife of this man?" Mr. Raymond's voice faltered, and his countenance, latterly much bloated, assumed a purple and inflamed appearance. When all was over, he moved as if to salute his daughter; but instead of the warm kiss of parental

affection on her cheek, she received the dying body of her father in her arms. A strong apopleptic fit had rendered the master of Raymond a corpse within twenty minutes after he entered the Church of Cloyne. How truly were the words of Scripture fulfilled : " In the midst of life we are in death ! "

And poor Marian !—what would she not have given that the blow, if it was to be, had fallen a few minutes sooner ! " Then, then I might have been preserved from this hateful union—what cared I for those estates ?—I might have lived and toiled at liberty, not driven, alas! to live with him I loathe ! "

It is but justice to Sir Charles Barnett to confess, that after this unfortunate occurrence, he did everything he could to gratify the feelings of his bride. Though strongly disliking the Irish wakes and funerals, yet he permitted both to proceed according to ancient custom, and took the lead in the procession as chief-mourner. His conduct towards Marian on this occasion commanded her esteem, if not her love ; and deeply grateful was she for it. Youth is apt to attribute *all* vices where it discovers *one*, and to believe that those they dislike must inherit all the faults and imperfections they can possibly imagine. So it was with Marian ; yet she endeavoured, with a resolution, not one of her least TRIALS, to make herself believe she had done her husband injustice.

" I will now," she said, " labour to discharge my duty."

When all was over, and they prepared to leave the country for the London season, Lady Barnett, on descending one morning from her dressing-room, found Sir Charles occupied in giving directions to various workmen as to the necessary repairs of the castle during their absence ; the old armour and fishing-tackle had been torn rudely from the walls, and lay in heaps upon the marble pavement.

" Let these rubbishing things be given away, and the pictures and statues I shall send from London occupy their places." One old gun, surmounted by a cap and fishing-rod, still remained

untouched near the back entrance to the hall. "Shall I take these down too, your honour?" inquired one of the men.

"No, no," replied Marian, who was leaning against the oaken balustrades of the staircase; "no, no, Sir Charles does not wish these removed."

"Not removed, my dear!—you cannot, surely, mean these things to remain stuck up over the door! they would destroy the harmony of my entire arrangement. The hall is really fine; those columns and carvings are in admirable keeping; and, when my plans are completed, it will be as imposing as anything in England. You are not serious, Marian?—Peters, Lady Barnett has changed her opinion—remove those things."

At this instant the remembrance of her noble cousin, as he had placed his implements of sport in their rest, while she, with tearful eyes, stood at one side, and poor Busca, little dreaming that his dear master was about to depart, at the other, came full upon her—she could not bear them to be removed—she could not support the idea of their being profaned by any touch. Before Peters could execute his master's orders, she called, "Forbear!" in a tone, it might be of emotion, it might be of authority—it was, most likely, a mingling of both. "Sir Charles," she added, going into the breakfast-room, "Sir Charles, I would speak with you." He followed her into the apartment, and closed the door.

"It is a weakness, and one for which, perhaps, I should beg you to forgive me; but I have never, since the commencement of our acquaintance, used the slightest concealment towards you." Sir Charles bowed. "That cap, gun, and fishing-rod were hung there by my cousin the night before he left us—for ever; will you oblige me by not having them removed?"

There was a pause. Often, how much of our destiny hangs upon a few words! Brief they may be—unstudied, and seemingly unimportant, yet how powerful their influence! The instruments of will, the arbiters of fate, and its controllers!—brief words, that stamp an impress on memory which time can never efface! Oh, if words were but more accurately weighed, how much misery might be spared, how much evil prevented!

Marian waited for his reply—on it depended more than the narrow-minded baronet imagined ; she waited long, so long that it became necessary again to speak.

"On the morning of my marriage, the last request I made my poor father was, that they should remain untouched."

"You must," replied Sir Charles, but too evidently mortified, "attach much value to the person who placed them there, to object so strongly to their removal."

"I did attach much value to him, and I regard his memory—he was my cousin."

Sir Charles forgot his good-breeding, and, with a perfectly well-bred sneer, interrupted her at the word—*cousin*. "You need not attempt to conceal the fact from *me*, Lady Barnett; he was more dear to you than any cousin."

"Sir Charles," she replied, "I never did, and never will, conceal aught from you. You are my husband ; and, whether he be deserving or not, a husband has a right to a wife's unqualified confidence : concealment I believe to be the root of all domestic misery. What my sentiments towards Henry O'Donnell were, you heard long ago, and from me ; you cannot entertain any unpleasant feeling towards the clay—the mouldering clay—of my childhood's friend. I promised him that those implements of the chase should never be removed except by his own hand ; do then, I intreat you, let them remain as long as I live—they are in the shadow—do not, pray do not, remove them, for "——

"For my sake," she wished to have added, but she could not ; she was unable to frame an appeal, bordering on affection, to one for whom she felt it not.

"I am sorry, Marian," he replied coldly, "but I regret to say, that trifling as it may seem, having given the order, I cannot see how I can retract ; the things will be better out of sight. I had no idea that you entertained such a strong *penchant* for the gentleman ; indeed, cherishing such a feeling, you ought to have paused before you honoured me with your hand."

Marian's only reply was a bitter groan ; and, without another

word, she left the apartment, crossed the hall, and proceeded with unmingled bitterness of spirit to the dressing-room she had recently quitted. She threw herself on her knees, and burying her face in her hands, gave way to a burst of regret, such as she seldom indulged in—for tears *are* an indulgence, and a blessed one, to the stricken at heart. Mingled with her tears were prayers—prayers to the Almighty, who is known to us in the hour of trouble, whether of mind or of body, as the One holy and true Spirit, who will either remove from us our afflictions, or teach us how to bear them as Christians only can. Marian had known little, during her early years, of religion, except its name; but sorrow and solitude had taught her where she might find consolation; and enthusiasm, so strong a feature in her character, having latterly no worldly object to chain it to earth, worked its way towards heaven. "Teach me, O Lord!" she ejaculated, "to bear the reproach I have in a measure merited; teach me to perform the hard and heavy duty of a wife to him whom I love not, though Thou knowest full well there is no other on earth whom I do love."

She was interrupted by a whining noise, which she well recognized—it was poor Busca! Her four-footed friend was readily admitted; and she pondered in her mind whether she ought to caress even his dog, when he whom at the altar she had engaged to love, honour, and obey, would, she doubted not, disapprove of her so doing. The poor animal stretched upon the rug as usual, and contented himself by elevating an ear occasionally, as his beautiful mistress paced up and down the chamber. It was evident that Sir Charles Barnett's mind, however dressed and fashioned by circumstances, was intrinsically poor and mean. Had he thought kindly, or even wisely, he would have seen at once, that though Marian was perhaps wrong, as a married woman, in cherishing the remembrance of one, all too dear in former times, yet the noble frankness she had shown, the freedom from all art upon the subject, the confidence she reposed in him so bravely, deserved a similar return; and had he been capable of valuing her as she merited, he would have been proud to

preserve what she had frankly confessed she valued. Were even the *wisdom* of generosity sufficiently estimated, the world would go on in better tune: people, for the most part, endeavour to bring events within the compass of their own narrow conceptions, instead of striving to expand with them.

PART THE SECOND.

TAX yer pardon, Miss—my Lady, I mane—dear, dear, it's hard to turn one's tongue to a word one's not used to; but you have the heart's respect, any way," said the old gardener at Castle Raymond, the morning before Marian was to leave her childhood's home—"and may I make bould to ax, if you intend taking Busca with you over the seas?"

"Yes, Frank."

"Lave him with me, Miss, my Lady, and I'll take care of the baste; he has no taste for travelling now; and sure Nelly Riley's son, Bat, writes a fine hand, and 'ill indite a letter with the priest (no disrespect to his reverence); and, if you didn't think I'd be makin' too free, sure I'd direct a line to tell you how Busca was, and how the roses got on, and all about the melon-bed, and the new graft on the apple-trees."

"I shall be happy to hear from you, thank you, Frank; but I cannot part with Busca, he was my father's favourite, and,—in short, I must take Busca."

"Busca," persisted the gardener, "is fond o' me, and he and the grey cat are the best friends in the world now; they lie together on my ould jock, that sarves 'em for a mat; indeed, lady dear, I wish you would lave me Busca."

"I am grieved I cannot oblige you in this, Frank; is there any thing else I can do? can I send you any thing from England?"

"God bless you, my lady, I should like a quarter of English tobaccy; I've a grate curiosity to see what sort of stuff it raally is; and I hear their kail, particularly their brocoli, bates Banagher. But ma'am, my Lady darlint, for the love o' the poor ould master, and for the love—no, not that, because, in coorse it's past, but, for the regard of Master Harry—lave Busca to me; see how the craythur rams his could nose into my hand, as if he said, I'll stay wid you."

"It's very strange you should have set your mind on this!"

"May be so, my Lady; strange things happen every day. Sure, it's mighty strange what makes sich a beautiful, great, big sunflower, as that yonder, come out of a little blay, humpy seed, not as big, no, nor half, nor quarter as big, as a praytee's eye! Well, plaze yer Ladyship, all I can say is, that if you don't lave Busca behind, he'll never see the ould grey cat again, that's all!"

"Frank! I insist upon knowing what you mean."

"Ah, Busca, a cushla!" continued the gardener, with true Irish tact—"ah, thin, Busca, would yer misthress not let on, I'd incense her into it, you poor brute, how ye'r no favourite with Misther Bijaw, my Lord's valley de sham, and how he said to me—'Ould Blossom,' says he, 'if my lady intends bringing that ould stinking baste (axing yer pardon, Busca; but 'twas he said it, not me) with *us* (by *us*, maneing Sir Charles and himself, the rude, ill-raired pup.)—with us, says he, 'we'll give him a dose,' says he, 'crossing the Channel, and then make *our* (the impident blackguard!) *our* lady believe he died of the say sickness.' So with that, says I, what would his honour say to that? says I.

'O, nothing at all,' says he; 'for Sir Charles hates the sight o' him, and wheniver my lady's back is turned gives him a poke or a puck with his foot—I have good raison to know that he'd never say a word, except "O be joyful," if he was fairly gone.' So I says nothing; for the might's the right evermore with thim English agin us. Now, ma'am, my Lady, a' vourneen, you'll let Busca stay with his ould friend Frank!"

Marian made no reply; her heart was too full to speak. She turned from the gardener to conceal her emotion, and at a break in the plantations encountered her husband.

"I have been giving some final directions as to the trees we wished put down this autumn," he observed, as they met. "Have you been directing your old gardener as to your flowers? By the way, he gets old, that Master Frank—I must send off some of my Scotch people from Barnett Park, to get everything in right order."

"Not to turn away Frank, Sir Charles?"

"Certainly not, my dear, if you wish to the contrary—always most happy to meet your views, where they are consistent with *propriety*."

Poor Marian made no observation on this sarcastic reply, but fancied that Sir Charles cast an unkind look on the hound, who, certainly, often provoked the baronet; for, in former times, Busca always received his advances with a certain exposure of the teeth and gums, not very flattering to one desirous of cultivating his acquaintance. Few words passed between them, until, on reaching the vestibule, Sir Charles closed the door, so as to prevent the hound from entering.

"In England, Marian, dogs are not advanced to the rank of companions, particularly when they grow offensive by age."

It was on Marian's lip to inquire if all things grew disagreeable as they grew old; but she remembered that "grievous words stir up anger," and held her peace. Sir Charles continued—

"I do not think that Busca will ever bear a sea voyage."

"I think not," was her forced reply to him, whom. under the influence of her strongly-excited feelings, she regarded as little better than a premeditated murderer. That he should meditate

the destruction of an animal he knew she so fondly loved, was cruel; but to take his valet—a low-bred, insulting foreigner—into his confidence, and plan with him the death of that poor blind favourite, was mean, low, pitiful. How, in defiance of all her resolutions to the contrary, did she despise this man of worldly wealth and narrow soul! With this feeling came another—*he was her husband!*

Despite all that has been said to the contrary, there is something singularly brilliant and invigorating in a London season. The weather, from April to June, is, generally speaking, on its best behaviour; the animation spreading itself, either as a bane or a blessing, over all classes of society during the sitting of Parliament, is in full force: it gives gentlemen something to talk about in the park, in the streets, at the clubs; and excites something bordering on interesting conversation during the ten or twenty minutes' pause before dinner, at which time the said gentlemen "bunch" together in whatever portion of the room fronts the largest looking-glass, or lounge on the softest sofas, to the exclusion of the ladies, and are thus enabled to criticise, quite at their ease, the merits of the last new speaker.—Despite, then, the *mauvais ton* of almost every man of "*ton*" you meet, still there is much to charm and bewilder the senses in the London SEASON. The parks teem with beauty and elegance. The opera, the finest and most glorious of sensual enjoyments, is in full force. The exhibitions, such as they are, are open; and there are always more than two or three subjects at each to repay you for the loss of time consequent on looking at all. There is bustle in the streets,—not the ill-bred city bustle, that forces you off the pavement, and covers you with mud!—but the bustle consequent on the crowding of the better classes of society in search of amusement. Noble horses parade the squares; carriages, unrivalled in beauty of design and execution, meet each other at every corner. There is a rich and gorgeous blaze of all that is bright and curious in the magazines and shops;

the best books are reserved by the wary publishers for "the season;" the most exquisite exotics flourish in the conservatories of the great and gay; and the air of the favoured "West End" is redolent of the purest perfumes. Any foreigner, passing casually through London during "the season," would pronounce us the wealthiest and happiest of nations, and imagine that distress had never set its seal of want, and sin, and death, upon any of the children of Britain. Those who seek truth must dive amid the turbulent and disordered waters of sorrow, as well as ramble through the smiling groves and laughing pastures of joy!

It was Mariau's third season in brilliant London, and many thought it was never truly brilliant until she appeared. Both in Ireland, and on her husband's estates in England, she had been, as far as she was permitted, an angel of charity: she had founded schools, clothed the naked, fed the hungry; and the deep-felt and grateful blessing followed the "pale lady" wherever she went. The first season passed off as her husband expected; to use the cant phrase, she was splendidly successful. Though Barnett is an ugly and common-sounding name, there were "Barnett hats," and the hair was "*Crêpé à la Barnette;*" and Lady Barnett's *wit* was often quoted, as the wit *par excellence.* Those who called her witty, knew not what wit was. Wit may be likened to a silver arrow, pure, glittering, and pointed: hers was of a more severe quality—it was satire; not the flippant and ill-tempered smartness that descends to mere personality, but that finer and more ennobling quality, which feared not to tell Philip feasting that it would only commune with Philip fasting. Witty minds are seldom great, but a just quantity of satire sharpens the intellect unto perfection; it is the whetstone of many virtues, and is respected when its playful counterfeit is run down by temper and good sense. Sir Charles Barnett had taken a wife to help him to support his waning state; but he had not calculated on eclipse, and by no means relished the

universal homage rendered to her marvellous wisdom and sound judgment.

The President of the Royal Academy painted her portrait during her second season, and, with his usual skill, completed a picture that might have made Titian jealous. Lady Barnett looked at it for some time in silence; and then, turning to the polished artist, she observed, "It is beautiful; but you know what it needs to make it like me."

"Lady," he replied, with admirable tact, "it wants A SIGH UPON THE LIP."

And he was right.

"My dear Lady Barnett, I have a little request to make of you this evening," said Sir Charles; "it is that you will not enter into any conversation with the Russian envoy about the plans *we*" (the mean creature had nothing to do with them) "adopted for the education of the poor in Leicestershire. If he speaks again upon the subject, refer him to *me*. And I really wish you would not agree with Lord Somerton's notions about literature—he invariably contradicts me; and, therefore, oblige me by not conversing with him."

"I will do as you desire."

"I think we shall confine our parties, this season, to dinners, concerts, and card-assemblies. Balls" (Sir Charles had lately been afflicted with gout) "are really incorrect, since the introduction of waltzes."

"I am glad to find that your ideas of correctness are improving," replied his lady. Sir Charles winced.

Will it be believed that the very man who was lecturing and directing this high-souled woman on such trifling points, was continuing (almost openly) in the practice of what the uninitiated would call "gross immorality," but what the well bred delicately classify as a *liaison?* Oh, this twisting and mooting of terms!—this cloaking of all that is abominable under the banner of "human frailty!"—this glossing and polishing of vice!—this burning of incense in high places, and bending the knee to Baal! How does the free-born soul sicken at, and loathe, such homage! God forbid that we should for a moment wish to see the levelling

of rank, or the decent barriers of society overthrown. We honour the one, and respect the other; but vice is vice, though a coronet bind the brow; and virtue is as holy in a peasant's cottage as in a ducal palace. How many are worshipped, literally, during the season in London, because of their fêtes and splendour, who would not be tolerated in what is termed decent society, were it not for "station?" Lady Barnett felt this deeply; and while she was idolized, loathed the idolatry. Not that she was insensible to praise or applause: what woman is—what woman ought to be? but she longed for a devotion, which she knew, as a wife, there was but one who could render. She wished to be the object of a warm and fervid affection, as she had once been. She was constantly the victim of her penetration, and sometimes wished that God had, in his mercy, bestowed upon her less feeling and more folly. There was one thing, and one only, that yielded her pleasure; she had an extended sphere of doing good; and the manner in which she threw her entire soul into relieving the necessities of others, often excited in her worldly-minded husband an astonishment he did not deem it necessary to conceal.

"I cannot think, Marian, why you are so anxious about the dead curate of Lyme's daughters: one is deaf, and the other blind; moreover, nobody knows them."

"Simply, Sir Charles, because their father is dead, one deaf, the other blind, and nobody knows them."

Sir Charles muttered something about "bad habits, contracted through a defective education, and wild Irish views of manners and society;" and the once free-hearted Marian listened, as she had often listened, patiently; for "patience is the badge of all her tribe."

Would those who crowded her splended saloons, and were astonished at her taste and calm majestic beauty,—would they have believed that the canker was busy at a heart, where sorrow had made its sepulchre?

"Lady Barnett," inquired one of her visitors, casually taking up a morning paper from amid the heap of periodical literature

with which it is customary to heap a library table, "do you ever read our political journals?"

"Hardly ever."

"We continue gaining victory on victory; indeed, Napoleon must soon evacuate Spain and Portugal."

Marian could never hear any allusion to the Peninsular campaign without emotion; her heart beat violently as the gentleman continued.

"So, I see an exchange of prisoners has lately been effected; some Irish names, too, among the number. You must surely be interested in them, Lady Barnett? Calvert O'Connell, lieutenant in the 3rd dragoons; Barry St. Leger—ay, all the St. Legers were brave fellows; Henry O'Donnell, captain in the Royal Irish"——

Marian seized the journal from the grasp of the astonished lounger, and in another moment—the paper clasped within her hands, her eyes starting from their sockets—she had fallen back on the sofa, not in a fainting fit, but in strong and terrific convulsions.

"And so, Marian,—you are a wedded wife! and though now, three seasons the star of the ascendant, I hear you are still triumphant. Long may you continue so—*if it makes you happy!* I have been more than three years a miserable prisoner, without one friend, who remembered Harry O'Donnell sufficiently to be interested in his exchange, which only chance has effected. I do not, lady, blame you;—you doubtless fancied I was dead; for you could not have been so altered, as not to have felt some anxiety for *your cousin's* liberty.

"I intend paying my respects, in the course of the morning, to you and Sir Charles;—to whom I beg my respects. You will not be surprised at my strange handwriting, when you hear that I lost an arm at Albuera!—HENRY O'DONNELL."

It was more than a month since Lady Barnett had learned that Harry – her first—her only love—was in existence. When questioned by her husband as to the cause of her sudden illness, she told him all the truth. "If," she said, within her own bosom—"If Sir Charles suspects me—at all events I shall have the satisfaction of not deserving his suspicion"

"Was it joy or sorrow?" inquired her tormentor, "that occasioned your Ladyship's agitation?"

"Sir Charles," she replied, "do not trifle with feelings that have ever been laid bare before you. I do not deny your *right* to ask that question; and I reply frankly—that it was a mingling of both."

Her husband gazed steadily upon her; and her dark deep eye,—her broad high forehead,—and her fine pale features,—neither quailed nor shrank from the scrutiny;—even Sir Charles was moved.

"Marian," he said, "you are a noble woman, but not suited either for me or for the present times;—you should have remained among the stars, until a holier sun shone upon England. I never met woman with truth like yours."

The involuntary tribute of such applause, paid by Vice to Virtue, is great indeed! Marian wept long and bitterly; in the silence of her chamber, she prayed;—and they who know how hard it is to wish that those we love may not love in return, will appreciate her petition. She prayed that Harry would only remember her as his cousin. When she thought of the many changes she had seen men make, without an effort, she indulged in what may be termed the *painful hope*, that he might find it, perhaps had already found it, easy to look upon and love another. There was something in the tone of Captain O'Donnell's letter that repressed this conviction. I have heard many women assert, after receiving a declaration of love, that—"indeed they had no idea of such a thing; they never thought the gentleman entertained the slightest affection for them:"—it might be true: but I never believed a word they said. Men are, doubtless, clever enough; but clever as they are, women, on this subject, are seldom—*never* at fault;—they have an in-

tuitive knowledge of man's affection;—they generally know it before he is aware of it himself;—and though man can easily *assume* an affection he does not feel, he must be a better adept in concealment than I can imagine possible to hide a preference. The one phrase,—"if it makes you happy,"—showed at once his anxiety, and his belief that she was miserable. The precious letter was more than half-way to her lips, yet she stayed its course, with a firmness those who have loved her will estimate, and laid it on her desk. In a few moments she arose, and, with the letter in her hand, proceeded to Sir Charles's study.

"Lost an arm! Sad thing, sad thing!" repeated Sir Charles, after he had finished its perusal. "Well, I shall be glad to see him. He is your relative; and we owe it to ourselves to treat our relatives with propriety."

"I think I must spend the day at Richmond, with Mrs. Brownlowe."

"No, no, Lady Barnett, it would be exceedingly wrong; you can receive your cousin here. I dare say we shall find him sadly changed."

Sir Charles, well skilled in human nature, was at fault:—the truth was, that with the exception of his wife, his intimate female acquaintances had been of a very indifferent stamp: and he fancied that a worn-out mutilated soldier could possess no attractions for one so *fêted* and admired as his charming wife! Lady Barnett, well as she knew his littleness of mind, almost hoped that something like generosity had illumined his dark soul. She, too, was mistaken.

"He loves me still," she said, while tears of bitter agony coursed each other down her pallid cheeks,—"his love has been unchanging as my own—Oh, what am I, to own it! and he talked of my father, and of Castle Raymond, and the dead lark, and poor Busca! and my husband has been either mad or cruel enough to ask him to stay within these walls. What then? Am

I fallen so low as to fear myself?" And the young and proud beauty paced her chamber with unequal steps.

Woman is never in so much danger as when she confides in her own strength. The meek-hearted and trembling find security in weakness, for they look for protection where it is always found,—they seek advice from the Most High, and implicitly employ his precepts as their laws: there is always safety for the humble Christian. According to the correct and established laws of English society, if a married female find not a friend in her husband, she is perfectly and completely cut off from everything approaching to friendship with the more wise and superior sex. If trusting to the pure and uncontaminated counsels of her own heart and motives, she seek advice or protection, in any way, directly or indirectly, from any man, no matter how exalted his character, or pure his motives, her reputation is tainted, irrevocably tainted, and therefore nothing worth—she sinks in the moral scale, and can never retrieve what she has lost. I am willing to allow the hardship of this state; and yet, valuing as I do the reputation of my high-souled and beautiful countrywomen, more than their individual happiness, I can hardly wish it altered. To this very strictness, to this hardship in peculiar cases, we owe much of our domestic happiness, and all our good fame,—a fame that was never tainted, until an assumption of foreign manners (that sit as ill upon us as foreign fashions) rendered many, too many, of those in high places, open to the scorn of the right-minded. "What," it may be asked, "is a woman to do who is married to a brute or a fool?—is she to have no friend, no companion?" I answer, None; she either made her election, or it was forced upon her; but in either case, she owes it to her God, to her sex, and to her country, to bear her cross, and prove that she rises superior to the ills that are heaped on her devoted head. No matter how pure may be her motives, the world reads actions, and not hearts.

Lady Barnett believed that her cousin was as high-souled as herself; she remembered how strict his notions had been, and how often he had chid and reproved the volatility of disposition

that had, at one period of her existence, rendered her so gay and thoughtless. She had read, deeply too, the records of human life, yet it never occurred to her to bring her observations to bear upon her cousin:—"He taught me ever what was best and wisest, and to whom can I look with greater safety for advice if I should need it?" With this feeling she scrupled not to consult her cousin upon many points unconnected with her husband, or the domestic differences, that, despite her care and real attention to prevent, sprang up between them. Her innate propriety, more than her judgment, counselled her not to suffer any interference upon such points; and, on all other matters, her vanity was gratified to find that her monitor agreed with her in all things. It must also be confessed, that though at first she had shrunk from meeting her cousin, yet, after that meeting was over, she experienced a tranquillity, a security in his presence, to which she had long been a stranger. She had never enjoyed the sweet privilege of appealing, with all her feelings, to her husband. Though she had never used concealment, she could not be said to have reposed confidence,—that full, perfect, and happy confidence, which is the out-pouring of an affectionate heart, and forms a true earthly paradise. Her vivid imagination, that had so long communed with heaven, had again found an earthly object upon whom to lean,—and "Cousin Harry," as before, was even more the mind's idol than he had been at Castle Raymond. *There* he had been her guiding star:—the idea, the possibility of his being *changed*, had never once occurred to Marian; she looked to him to strengthen her good resolves, *not* to overturn them.

Of all things likely to suffer change, nothing changes like man! With women the case is different; events with them are things of rare occurrence, and there is little chance of one rubbing out the record of another. The impression has time, not only to be made, but, consequently, is not easily effaced. Men fall rapidly into various societies, and hear various opinions; this occasions them to be less firm, or, to use a harsher term, less obstinate. It may be for good;—it may be for evil. We shall see

Captain O'Donnell was almost domesticated in Sir Charles Barnett's house, and people did begin to say, that "they wondered," — "were surprised," — "astonished," — "suspected,"— "hoped not."—"Lady Barnett, so beautiful."—"What could she see in him?"—"Husband careless,"—"used her harshly;"—and, at last, some of these whispers absolutely reached the ear of Sir Charles. With a violence totally uncalled for, he assailed and reproached his wife. She replied with her usual truth and dignity,—for one criminal idea,—one feeling that angels could pronounce impure,—had never stained her soul. Yet she had stood on the brink of a precipice, and blessed, a thousand times blessed, was the power that told her of her danger!

"I will tell Harry that he must depart," she said; "and his sense of propriety will point out to him the necessity for doing so."

It was more easily said than done. The time came, and brought its trial. With the instinctive propriety and delicacy of a virtuous woman, she avoided the reason why, and told him only of the fact. Little was she prepared for his comment;—little did she dream of his moving from the high and honourable pedestal, on which her imagination, more than his own merits, had placed him. The idea of Henry O'Donnell having become "a man of the world," as the phrase goes;—of these bland and fascinating manners being only the polished surface;—and the certainty that Continental example and habit had sullied that true and noble spirit which she imagined was more than proof against contamination, fell slowly, but heavily, upon her feeling heart.

"I see how it is," he said; "Sir Charles is jealous. I thought the world would whisper."

"You thought the world would whisper!" repeated Lady Barnett. "You thought it, and yet you remained near me!"

"Marian," he replied mournfully; "you have not now to learn how dearer far than life you are to me; the only living creature of my kin; the only being who binds me to existence. You are not happy, and yet you would separate those whose lives depend upon being near each other. All I have asked

is your society, and that you would not surely refuse your cousin!"

Marian could not repeat all that Sir Charles had said; she could only entreat, command, O'Donnell's departure; and to her honour be it recorded, she did so firmly—she neither quailed nor wavered in her mandate,—yet could she not utter the reproaches that grew upon her lip at his acknowledging he had expected the world would notice and misconstrue his attentions; while anticipating this result, he had yet remained.

It was now in vain for him to seek her pity, by a representation of his utter loneliness, and by drawing a true but melancholy portrait of what her situation would be when deprived of her only *friend*. Her resolution was taken; she saw and parted from her cousin. Letter after letter were delivered to her, but she returned them unopened. "I might read all he could say," she would repeat to herself, "but I will not. I might read without danger, for he is not now what he once was." This was true; but when she imagined, in her hours of indignation, that he had become a being of no importance in her eyes, she erred in judgment.

The season drew towards its termination, Sir Charles became worse, and was more morose than ever. He had been a good deal disappointed lately;—had not produced as good an effect in "the House" as he had anticipated; and, somehow or other, Lady Barnett was not as attractive as usual. Hints were followed by direct charges, and the usual recriminations succeeded. It was in vain that Marian recalled to his remembrance her ingenuous disclosures, her aversion to meet her cousin, and the promptness with which, on Sir Charles's first intimation, she sacrificed all her feelings to his wishes. He saw that she was heart-broken, and, with the characteristic of a perfect tyrant, he persisted in his torture; coolly communicating, as the termination of his discourse, that she should immediately accompany him to Castle Raymond; "the most out-of-the-way place," as he observed, "and of course the best to hide his disgrace." How her proud heart beat within her bosom! And when, long after midnight, she reasoned herself into the submission which, as a wife, she

felt was her first duty, she knelt, and pressed her throbbing brow within her small white palms, and prayed fervently to the Almighty to strengthen her in all good things. She thanked Him too, in that He had mercifully taught her, ere it was too late, the painful, the agonizing truth, that he on whom she had bestowed a love, far nearer to devotion than to any earthly passion, was all too tainted to dwell in her remembrance, save as a vision of the past; which, like the lark of her young days, had soared towards heaven, yet found its death on earth.

"Troth, Nurse Grady, and it must be yerself that's glad to get the young misthress back," said our former acquaintance, Nelly Riley, to the nurse of Castle Raymond; "and she's looking very poorly; and not, by no manner of means, as handsome, to my thinking, as before she wint away."

"She can't be blind to poor Sir Charles's fate," replied the sapient nurse: "he's had the gout in his stomach twinty times, and it'll choak him some of these days; and thin we'll have a new masther, I'm thinking."

"Is't the captain ye mean? Arrah! be asey, now!—I wish her better luck. The captain, my lannan's more changed nor any of 'em. Sir Charles is the ould thing that, as I've often said, would make broth of his father's bones. My Lady's heart, God bless it! is the same as ever—a beautiful heart she has. It's useless trying to turn May butter into a flint-stone; but the captain has got foreign hurling in his head—and, don't tell me—if he had true regard for his cousin, he wouldn't visit the gamekeeper's daughter so often."

"My Lady," replied the nurse, bridling, "knows nothing o. his even being in the counthrey—how should she? And as to the gamekeeper's daughter—did Master Harry tell you it *was* the daughter he visited? Mightn't he have a regard for the father, Mrs. Riley?"

"Mrs. Grady, ma'am," replied the shrewd Irishwoman, "you have a mighty grate regard for fine Frinch handkerchiefs, and

a fine decket o' corrall bades. I tould you my mind a-fore, and I'll tell it you agin, if you like, and make a clane breast at onc't; but, may be, betther not—time tells all things."

In a few weeks, the death of Sir Charles Barnett was duly announced in all the fashionable journals; and though, from what we know, Lady Barnett could not be called inconsolable, yet she behaved as was right and fitting her to do—nay, she did more; she watched her husband to the last; she tried to turn his thoughts towards that source from whence she had derived consolation; and she both prayed and wept when all was indeed over. Among all her trials, she had one consolation—he blessed her with his dying breath, and requested her forgiveness.

Her year of mourning was expired—perhaps the most tranquil year of her existence. Still young, with renovated beauty, and a large fortune, Lady Barnett was talked of, and toasted, far more than when her young heart beat, and her gleesome laugh sounded, amid the groves and hills of Castle Raymond.

Much was she tempted to revisit London: she had become a mark for all speculating fortune hunters, whether male or female; and if her intimacy with her cousin had ever cast a cloud over her fame. it had passed as shadows from a brilliant landscape.

But though others ceased to remember, she had not forgotten. I have said that Henry O'Donnell was a man of the world; and, as such, it will be readily believed he did not relinquish the idea that he might still be master of Castle Raymond, and its fair mistress. He had wisely withdrawn from the country on Sir Charles's death, well knowing that Marian's delicacy would shrink from his intruding at such a time; and when he did return, he managed to be introduced so as to avoid alarming her prejudices or creating any unpleasant sensations.

It must not be imagined that O'Donnell was what would be

considered either a bad or a heartless man: when he reasoned, he was invariably right; when under the influence of his passions, fearfully wrong: his mind had become imbued with a false philosophy, and it was convenient to be the disciple of a school that granted much licence. He loved Marian; but he loved her as a woman, without caring for or comprehending her true nobleness of soul. He had seen much of life, and the life of a soldier-prisoner had little in it to strengthen what might have been good. After he left London, he visited the scenes of his childhood; and the turf-raised mound to the dead lark, and the attention paid by the old gardener to Busca, by his lady's express command, confirmed Henry in the belief that she was unchanged. She was a living instance of the romance of life lingering and dwelling with advancing years. O'Donnell admired virtue and glory in the abstract, without possessing either the firmness, which is the groundwork of the one, or the enterprise necessary for the other. There is an undying essence in woman's love, which, like the costly perfume, endures after the vase that contained it is broken, and clings even to the hand of its destroyer. How Marian had loved is already shown: it now remains only to prove—what life proves daily, though books, often at variance with human nature, are too prone to set forth love in the conclusion as requited, and an end of triumph crowning a life of pain—that perfect happiness is as much a fable as unbroken unshine, and would be as wearisome, and as destructive. He who knows and orders best has willed it otherwise, and has ffered that the wickedness of some should draw forth the irtues of others; but those who trust in Him in heart and spirit vill feel that all is good.

It was a clear, calm evening, and the mistress of Castle Raynond was alone in her own halls. She had discarded the robes f mourning, and reclined, in jewelled state, in a room redolent f perfume.

Her thoughts were of a second marriage, and one upon which

she had not determined without some fears and misgivings; but woman's unassisted wisdom is little worth, when set against the strength of an affection which had grown with her growth, and outlived both time and sorrow. Her eye rested upon the wedding-ring, which still encircled her taper finger—it appeared to her an unhallowed badge; she slowly removed it, and, with a trembling hand and a blushing cheek, tried on another, which she took from a small red case. The sound of a distant footstep smote upon her ear, and, blushing still more deeply, she replaced the mystic bauble in its rest, and the other emblem of her wedded state upon her finger. As the evening deepened, and she continued still alone, she thought upon her cousin's faults; and what had appeared so criminal when it would have been sinful to have loved, had dwindled into a marvellously short catalogue of errors—failings rather—which she could hardly tell over. Her imagination wandered to the scenes of her early and of her present happiness; and she scouted from her memory the remembrance of her married life, as one would cast forth a loathsome object from what was otherwise cheerful and smiling. Harry's natural generosity of disposition had prompted him to enter into all her plans for the good of her tenantry. The village of Castle Cloyne was now clean and cheerful; its inhabitants felt themselves raised in the scale of society—and that is the true way of ensuring an Irishman's gratitude; the hills within sight of Castle Raymond were covered with cattle, the property of zealous and industrious farmers, who, if they did not manage quite as well as their English neighbours, yet promised to be all, within a little time, that their best friends could desire.

Marian revolved and re-revolved all her plans and projects for future happiness; and if a doubt did arise as to what her former fashionable friends might say, rather than analyze her feelings, she contented herself with the consideration, that she should not mix with them again—that she should be far away from their sneers and their comments—that she should be happy in her own dear country—happy amid the unsophisticated peasantry, who looked to her for all their comforts—happy with the chosen of her heart, in her youth's first and only affection! Generous,

and free-hearted in action as well as thought, Marian settled upon O'Donnell all the Raymond property. "He must be perfectly independent of me," argued the noble creature, "to render his happiness equal to my own." Her lover was all gratitude and thankfulness, and remonstrated much against that of which he secretly approved: but I must not do him injustice; his cousin's generosity touched his heart more than her other virtues—he could comprehend the one, but not the other.

They were married.

Those who truly and devotedly love, will understand me when I say, that Marian was as happy as woman could be for some months after her marriage—I had almost written that she was tumultuously happy; but it pleased God that her health grew feeble in a little time, and, though she did not suffer pain, she could not wander about with her beloved, as in former days. She hardly felt the privation while he was with her; but, though invariably kind, and even affectionate, Marian had discovered—what, had she not loved too well, she might have known before, —that upon the most important of all subjects they greatly disagreed. She had learned to trace the wisdom and the bounty of the Almighty in his works; she could read "good in everything;" she saw His glory in the firmament, His wonders in the flood; she had grown practically pious, from a deep sense and knowledge that in the belief and hope, springing only from true religion, was there refuge for the broken-hearted, or an unerring guide through the mazes of the world. Her religion had been the result of experience—she had seen its good, and felt its advantage; and while she longed for the time when her husband would join with her in prayer and praise, she yet dreaded lest her very efforts to make him what she wished, might fail, and drive him further from the belief in which she trusted.

Another year had passed; and again the mistress of Castle Raymond was seated alone in the same apartment in which we once saw her try on the token of a new contract. Colonel

O'Donnell (for money achieves rank) had been absent on business, and his wife, more impatiently than usual, awaited his return. As she threw open the casement windows, shaded by a rich drapery of pink and silver, and stepped forth upon the marble terrace that overlooked the lawn—the beams of the harvest moon shed a flood of light and glory upon her head; yet her step was somewhat feeble, and she threw her arm round one of the pillars of the colonnade to support her in a spot where she could hear the approaching tread of his horse's hoofs, long before they entered the avenue of fragrant lime leading to the castle. Suddenly, a female sprang upon the terrace, and stood beside the lady so silently, that Marian, unaccustomed as she was to fear, would have called to her servants, had not the stranger, by an energetic movement, entreated her to forbear. She looked upon the pale, attenuated figure, enveloped in a deep scarlet cloak; and as the hood, which had been drawn over the woman's face, fell back, Marian thought she recognised the features.

"You've forgotten me, lady, and no wonder," said the stranger; "I deserve that you should—and I only pray the blessed Virgin that I wasn't myself—God break hard fortune before every honest man's child!"

"I remember you now, Mary Deane," said Marian; "but it is impossible for me to remember one I have been so long without seeing—can I do anything for you, poor girl?"

The woman fell at her feet, and, while she kept her cloak closely clasped around her, sobbed forth a petition "that she would'nt turn *agin* her entirely, and use her worse than a dog."

She had, in truth, little reason to expect such treatment from the mistress of Castle Raymond, who raising her from the earth, would have led her into the room she had so recently quitted, had not the girl refused to enter.

"Sure I've made an oath never to cross *his door*, and don't ask me, lady, darlint, for I'm a poor unworthy sinner—God-stricken and dying, and willin' and happy to die, if I was fit,—though I am young, and the only child of my father—and yet, to my sorrow, I've heard the whiteheaded ould man pray that

I'd never been born—and worse, lady—worse nor that—I saw him" (and here her words came short and broken)—"I saw him kneel down on his own hearth-stone, and curse me and mine, lady; me and mine!—Oh! why indeed was I born,—why indeed was I born!—Yet I call the God who sees into my very heart this minute to witness for me, that, lady, darlint I meant you no wrong; but he had the winning way with him, and if he could win you, no wonder he bewildered me."

"Of whom speak you, Mary Deane?" inquired Marian, in a voice of agonising emotion, dreading she knew not what or whom —"Of whom speak you?"

"Of your husband, lady—of the father of—my child."

As she answered, her head sank upon her bosom, and throwing open the cloak that had hitherto shrouded her, discovered a sleeping boy upon her bosom.

"'Tis all a falsehood—a fraud got up to—to—drive me mad!" exclaimed Marian, "a base lie—Woman, how dare you slander him?"

"Look at him," replied Mary Deane—holding the child forward to where the light from a glowing lamp was streaming on the glittering pavement. Marian did look—long and anxiously looked—she pushed the small round yellow curls from the boy's forehead; and as the movement fully roused him from the deep sweet sleep of infancy, he smiled in her face, and clasped his little hands in admiration of some of the rich jewels that glittered on her dress. The smile confirmed the tale; and taught the lady of that noble house, that her most bitter trial was indeed arrived. Sir Charles's gallantries she had borne with fortitude; they had grievously wounded her deep sense of religion and morality—they had, moreover, hurt her woman's pride, but they had never seared her heart—they had never entered, and lacerated, and destroyed!

"Tell—tell me one thing," she demanded of the betrayed girl, who still cowered at her feet; "this child was born before our marriage; have you been sinless since?"

A deep and bitter groan was the only answer she received.

It was enough.

Marian would have paced the terrace, but she felt as if rooted to the spot whereon she stood. She was iron-bound—spell-bound to the very earth. The child, still in admiration of the brilliant jewels, crept towards her. Her first feeling was to spurn—to thrust it from her; in the madness of the moment her foot was lifted to the act, but she could not, it was HIS child!

The eye of the wretched mother had been fixed upon her infant's movements, and her sad heart beat more quickly when she saw he was not repulsed.

"What would you with me?" inquired Marian, when she could find utterance. "Speak and quickly."

"Lady, I am dying—dying of the same decline that took my mother away, so soon after I was born. See here." She held forth her arms, white and fleshless; they quivered in the moon-beams. "I am gone, entirely," continued the unfortunate, "and so I ought to be; for the beauty he talked about, went, and HIS love went with it, and I've been almost starvin' in a strange parish; and my father's curse, and your goodness, and all together hanging over me like a ban; and I couldn't die asy till I asked yer pardon, and asked"—— The mother's eye, which, still bright, gleamed like a lamp within a sepulchre, rested on her child. The glorious creature to whom she spoke, understood the appeal, and, immolating all common feeling, she stooped, and kissed the forehead of the unoffending infant; her silent offering ascended to the throne of the Almighty, a record of a virtuous woman's triumph. Mary Deane knelt, as if to pray, but she could not speak; she could only weep,—weep bitterly. At last she murmured—

"The stamp of the Lord was always on you; and you'll be good to the poor innocent babby, and forget its miserable mother? And now, lady, darlint, if I had only my father's for-giveness;—if I could only hear him take back the curse, I should die thankful; and, may be, the Lord would forgive me."

James Deane was the gamekeeper to whom Nelly Riley had alluded; and little had poor Marian thought, when interrogating him as to where his daughter had gone, that he had so much

cause for sorrow, and yet kept it within his bosom, lest it might poison his lady's happiness.

"I will see your father myself to-morrow, and entreat him for you."

"God in heaven bless you for that thought; but to-morrow, lady! *to-morrow will be too late!* I am dying now!"

"Follow me, then," replied Marian; "he must not refuse pardon when *I* ask it."

"And my child?" Mary Deane trembled violently, as she looked upon him for the last time.

"Leave him here. Have I not promised?" said Marian.

"You have, you have, lady. Och, lady dear! forgive me; I am a poor, miserable, wicked wretch, but och hone! och hone! *am I not a mother?* Sure an' I brought ye into the world, a-lannan," she continued, apostrophising the child, whom she held closely to her bosom, "I brought ye into the world, a perfect and beautiful boy; and I exulted over you; and when your little lip smiled on me, and your daushy fingers twisted in my hair,—God and the virgin forgive me! but I felt as if I could bear all the sufferings that war ever suffered, and all the sin that ever was sinned, for yer sake, and I thought, that though *he* might change to *me*, he never could change to *you*, for warn't you his own, own child?"

"Come, come," said Marian, hoarsely—for every word the woman spoke was as a dagger to her heart,—"the child is safe; are you not satisfied with my word?"

"Ay, ay, lady; God bless—bless you, lady, *but you are not his mother*. My heart's darlint! it isn't my eyes will watch you agin in the night; it isn't my ear will listen for yer breathin'; and, may be—may be, my own a-coushla! you'll never know that poor Mary Deane was yer mother; and so best—so best; for when *he* turned, who knows but *you* might turn as well!" She imprinted a long, long kiss upon the child's lips, who, accustomed to her caresses, had fallen asleep.

"You will see him again," murmured Marian.

"Never! never! never!" she replied, wildly; "and now I have looked my last!" She suffered the long red cloak to drop

from her shoulders, and rolling the child in it, laid him on the marble step that skirted the entrance; kneeling over him, she muttered a few short words, and then, slowly rising, she crossed her colourless arms upon her bosom, and said, "Now, God willin', I am ready."

Marian removed with her own hands the sleeping infant to a place of greater security, and, followed by Mary Deane (whose fleshless form seemed moved and urged forward by supernatural strength), she took her way to the gamekeeper's cottage. As they crossed the park, the tread of Colonel O'Donnell's horses came suddenly upon them: both stood behind a group of sapling oaks, as he and his servant passed; they clung to the boughs of the young trees for support; but as O'Donnell rode onwards, Mary Deane stretched forward so as to catch a glance at his departing shadow, while his wife, who not an hour before had so anxiously waited his return, remained erect on the spot, more like a statue of carved marble than a thing of life, for many minutes after the sound had ceased.

The old gamekeeper opened the door of his cottage himself to Marian's knock, and appeared almost terrified at seeing his mistress. His daughter had crouched behind her as she entered, and could neither stand nor speak.

"I am come, Deane," said his mistress, "to ask you to forgive your penitent girl. James Deane, *I* have forgiven her. I have taken her child into my house, and you must not refuse her, at such a time as this, her father's blessing."

The old white-headed man clasped his hands, and remained for some time silent; his wretched child crawled to his knees, and her long yellow hair entwined around his feet; she dared not look into her father's face.

"Deane, Deane, I entreat—I command you to forgive her!" reiterated the lady.

The old man looked as if he could scarcely comprehend her words.

"Father, father! oh, quickly, for I am dying!" Mary Deane at length exclaimed. He raised her to his bosom, and as he parted the long hair that shadowed her face, her head fell upon

his shoulder,—her eyes wandered,—her lips, white and livid, separated from over her teeth,—her fingers moved convulsively, —and he had just time to say, "God bless you, darling Mary!" —when she again sank upon the earthen floor;—her spirit seemed indeed departed, and Marian, with a true feeling of humanity, knelt to support her head. The dying creature opened her eyes, and fixing their glare upon the lady's face, three or four times repeated, "Not cursed, not cursed—my boy—my child"— and expired.

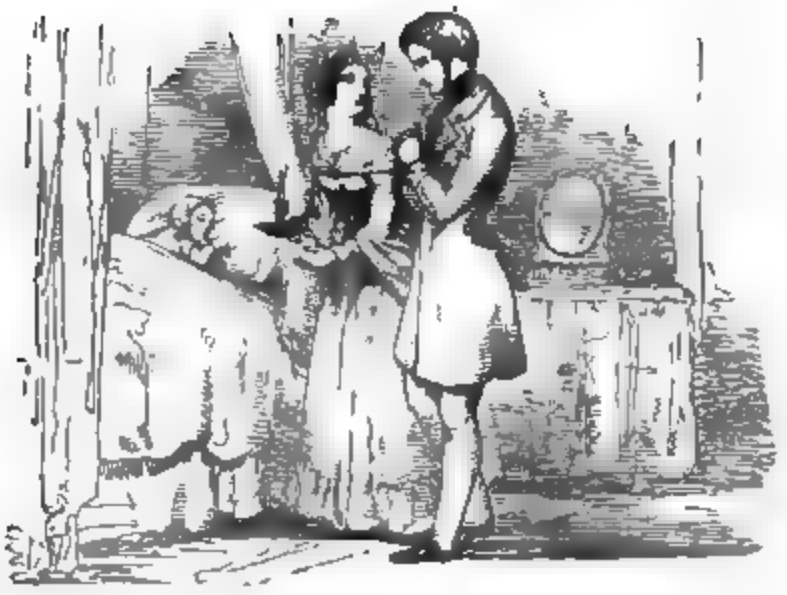
Such a sad event as this elevated Marian's nature to the highest point; always warm and enthusiastic, she felt keenly, and acted with promptness and decision—the father, who, while his daughter lived, imagined he had altogether lost her from his heart—now gave way to the agony of his feelings, and wept over the silent clay—still beautiful in the form of his child. He sate for a long time in the same spot—folding back her hair from features that were rapidly becoming cold and hard to his touch —and weeping reproaches to himself for every harsh word spoken in reproof of her crime—"My child!" he would exclaim—"I forgot your youth—you were so young—not twenty yet—and so innocent, and I left you to yourself, as if you had the wisdom of age—I was proud of you—and your praise, though I did not seem to hear it—was pleasant in my ears. So like her mother as she is—if she had lived I would have cared for her—I only kept her off to make her penitent—God knows that was all—I thought it right and honest—she was the child of honest parents—both—honest—My young and pleasant child —the does would not hide their fawns from her—and the robins would bring her their young—that she might feed them. I was too proud of her"—old Deane seemed quite unconscious of Marian's presence; it was as though he had sight but for one object—and that object his dead child—Marian saw—and felt— and knew that this was all her husband's work—and yet neither that, nor the knowledge of her own wrongs—roused her indignation to unwomanly or unmatronly wrath.

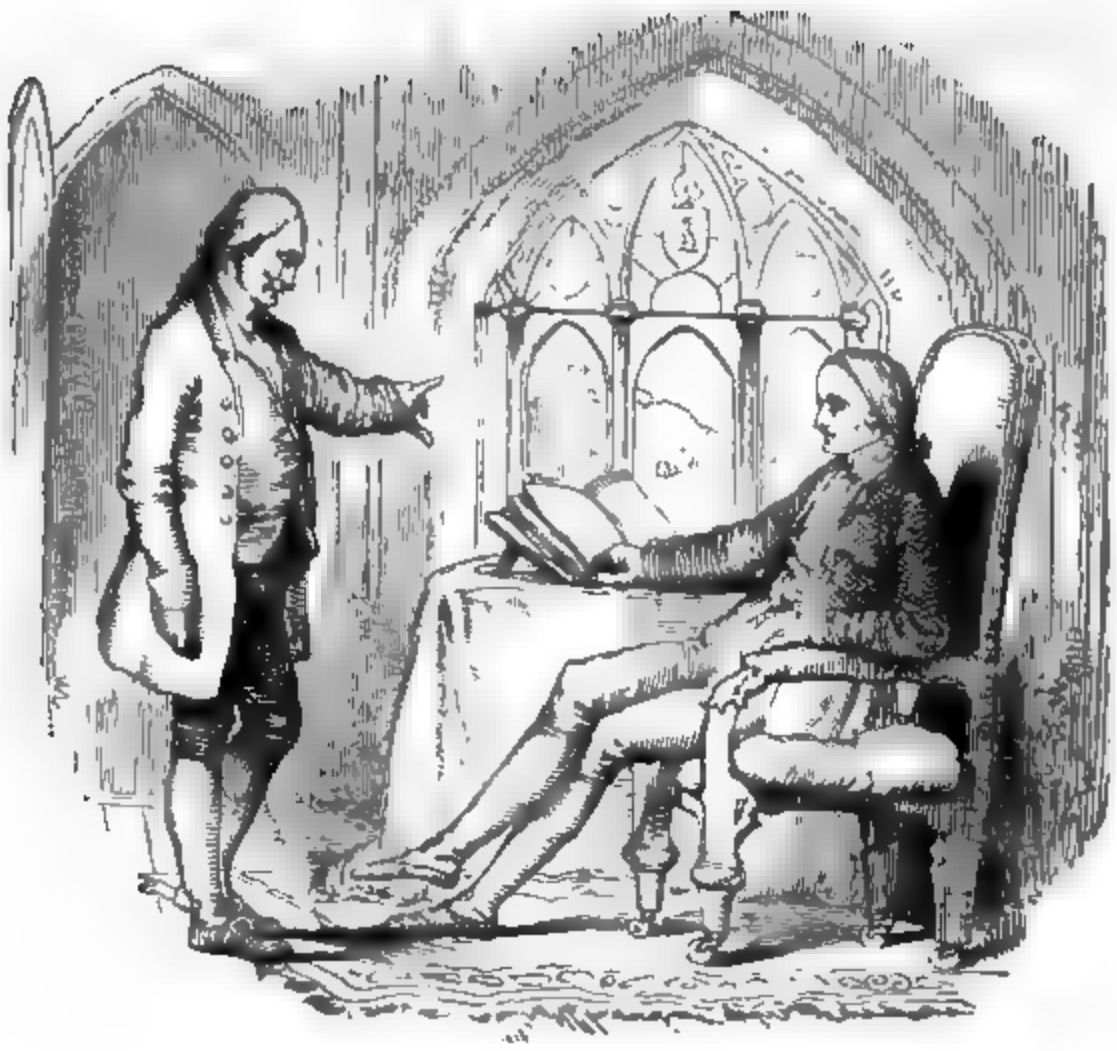
That same night, Marian O'Donnell conducted her husband to a quiet chamber, not very distant from her own; and drawing the curtains of a small bed, showed him his sleeping child. She stood for a moment so as to cast the full light of the candle upon his beautiful face, and then stooping down, she calmly kissed his forehead.

"The gamekeeper's daughter died, not three hours since, Henry, and I promised *her* to watch over *your* child. You have not known me, I think, as I deserved: may God forgive you for the poor heart you have broken, and the heart"—she turned proudly away, for tears were coming, and she would not let him see them fall.

What followed? No reproaches—no scenes—no storms. She knew and felt that she was still his wife, and that no matter how he performed his duty, she must not swerve from her's. Those who knew her best saw, indeed, that her eye grew dim, her step languid, and noted that her voice, ever sweetly musical, had grown like the sighing of a wounded bird; but she never told her feelings; she buried them within her bosom: and, after a few years, they produced as their fruitage—death. The iron had entered her soul, and not all the efforts made by a husband, who at last became convinced of her inestimable worth, could withdraw it. Could she have loved him less, her sufferings might have been mitigated; but, though conscious of his faults, the affection of her childhood remained pure, spotless, and devoted to the last; and all that could be said was, what is said every day of many a devoted woman, "How grievous was the sacrifice!" Yet how great was her example! how glorious her triumph! Long before her death, she was blessed by the conviction that at last O'Donnell trusted as fully, as perfectly as herself, to his Redeemer's merits. The delightful certainty of meeting him, a holy and purified spirit, "where sorrow and sighing shall be no more," was a bliss she would not have exchanged for worlds; the pomps and pageantries of life were poor and worthless compared to her spiritual glory; and she left this, only to be perfected in another, world. Her motto had been "Deeds, not words." Her grateful feeling to the Most

High was proved by acts of love, of forbearance, and of charity to her fellow-beings; and while the hearts of many will wonder at her forbearance, I feel inclined to assure those who are thus tried—and, alas! I grieve to know that many are so situated—that, hard as it may appear, they can only fulfil their duty to heaven and earth by—"Doing likewise."





THE FORCED BLOOMS.

PART THE FIRST.

NO MORE delightful village than East-court it would be difficult to picture; its fine old manor-house, combining the architecture of half-a-dozen reigns, bound together by ivy, the growth of at least two centuries; its straggling grotesque houses, with high gables and tall chimneys, fenced along the road by broad yellow hedges, cut here and there into various patterns—where small birds had nested time out of mind.

Yes; East-court *was* a pleasant village. There was in the centre of a sort of common green, a pond, large enough to entitle it to the dignity of being termed "a lake:" but the people of East-court having been originally an unambitious race, were satisfied that the pond should be simply called a pond—and a beautiful pond it was. Two noble willows extended their branches nearly to the water's midst, and a clump of mingled holly, and tapering feathery birch, was so beautiful in its growth and colour, that an artist once came ten miles to sketch it; a fact which the aged landlord of the "Three Bee-Hives" repeated several times each day of his life, forgetting altogether, good old soul! that every one in East-court was aware of a circumstance so flattering to the beauty of their long-loved home. The cottages at East-court were so disposed as to add to the effect of the larger dwellings—pretty white and brown erections they were —the walls as white as lime and labour could make them, and the dark-brown thatch nearly covered by those sweet and beautiful climbers which belong of right to the cottage homes of England.

On the very summit of an abrupt conical hill, that sprung up suddenly at the back of the manor-house, was a windmill, with wide extended arms and snow-white sails; and at the foot of the hill on the other side, guarded by some venerable trees, stood East-court church with the adjoining parsonage-house. There were but few shops at East-court, for the village was only three miles from the county town. But the very shops partook of the picturesque character of this truly English hamlet; and many declared there never was so quiet, so venerable, and yet, withal, so cheerful a village as East-court, or, as the very old people call it, "East-court o' the Hill."

It might well be a cheerful village; the gentleman who resided in the manor-house was a magistrate, and landlord of every adjacent dwelling. He was, in all acts of love and charity, a second Sir Roger de Coverley; and had a brother, a physician, who had one wing of the old building fitted up as a surgery and dispensary; but he never received fee for advice or payment for medicine, from any human being; feeling – at least so it would

appear, from the alacrity with which he dispensed both—that he was under particular obligation to all who took his prescriptions, and was never happy after a baby was born in the parish until it was vaccinated. It was rare, indeed, to meet with such men as the squire and his good brother. Well might East-court be the very paradise of English villages. I have said nothing of the rector; but certainly, unless he had carefully laboured in, and pruned and trimmed, his vineyard, the old would not have descended to their graves with such hope and humility, nor would the young have lived together in such peace and goodwill. For the rest, a dancing, a music, and a species of drawing, master, who combined drawing and writing, made each the round of the neighbourhood once a-week; thus the simple-minded people imagined that the means of "a polite education" were safely secured to their children; while the village school was under the immediate rule of the parish-clerk and his wife, and endowed in every way by the lord of the manor, so that the peasant class were considered well provided for as to sources of information.

I could say a great deal more in favour of Eastcourt and its inhabitants as they were about fifteen years ago, but perhaps have stated enough to create an interest for them, and may be permitted to pass on to the day on which a story connected with the village may be considered to open.

"A new family, a rich and respectable family, did you say, Isaac, wanting the Deerstone house, where Mr. Rowley died?" inquired Squire Russel of East-court, of his land-steward, Isaac Heywood.

"Yes, your honour," replied Isaac, bowing; "a lady and gentleman, Mr. and Mrs. Diggons by name, three young masters, two young misses (doll-looking young things), seven servants, a tutor, and a governess."

"Diggons," repeated the squire, who had a little leaning towards aristocratic names; "Diggons; it is not an old name, Isaac, though it may belong to respectable people."

"Certainly, sir; he's a fine gentleman, and wears chains and rings; a fine gentleman, and has (his man says) a great library,

for his lady is very clever; indeed, his man says, they are an extraordinary *clever* family."

"We never, I think, had a family of that description, Isaac, in the village," answered Mr. Russel, after a pause. "I cannot say I like people who appear more clever than their neighbours. However, this is perhaps a prejudice, and we should guard against prejudices. We will look into the references."

The references were looked into, and Mr. Diggons was found an eligible tenant for Deerstone. The arrival of the "clever family" occasioned more than the ordinary commotion, for they brought with them various things that the good people of the village had only heard of — chemical apparatus, electrifying machines, various astronomical instruments; in short, some of the older and simpler people regarded Mr. Diggons very much in the light of a necromancer, and the small, pale, acute-faced tutor as his familiar—something or other which they did not like to name.

When every thing was settled, and every one got used to every thing, Mr. Russel and his brother, Mr. Graham Russel, agreed that the Diggonses were a good sort of people, although eaten up by a desire to be celebrated; leaving the town where they were "nobodies" to reside in the country, where they hoped to be "somebodies;" labouring to acquire conversable knowledge of abstruse sciences; not being particular *who* approved, so long as they received approbation, unable to persevere to the extent of being informed, and yet having a smattering of every thing. Bating this eager thirsting after admiration—not after science for its own noble sake, but for the gaping admiration of the many—the family were kindly, cheerful, and hospitable; not selfish, either, in their pursuits, but willing to inform others. Three or four self-thinking inhabitants of East-court agreed with Mr. Russel and his brother in their rational estimate of the new family; but the many opened wide their mouths, and gave their "most sweet voices" in applause. The Diggonses were pronounced to be the most "talented people in England!" Science has many triflers in her train; and certainly among them she numbered every member of the Diggons family; from Mr

Diggons, who trifled with all the sciences, down to pretty little pale Elizabeth, who sighed and smiled over a miniature galvanic battery.

On the left-hand side of the village, commanding a view of the green, the huge pond, and the picturesque cottages beyond, was a pretty cheerful-looking house; "happy," you would have called it, for inanimate things can be so placed, so garnished, as to look happy. The draperies within the windows were of white muslin trimmed with blue silk lace and fringe; and the trellis-work outside was almost concealed by the wreaths of flowers that owed their luxuriance and beauty to much care and a warm southern aspect. There was an ample bow window, with several long narrow ones, which seemed playing hide and seek among the roses and myrtles that were always in blow; and the chimneys were tall and square, and the gables very high. There was also a conservatory, and you could see that, besides plants, it contained several birds of splendid plumage. In short, the outward appearance of the dwelling combined so much that was tasteful and expensive, the looker-on was assured there were both wealth and taste within—the latter keeping the former in subjection.

This house had the quaint name of East-in-Rest—why I know not; yet no one at East-court seemed to think it strange. It was almost as large, and of the same date as the manor-house, and had been, time out of mind, inhabited by the same family, once as numerous as honourable, but now dwindled down to a widow and two children—a boy and girl. The lady was still lovely; her children were beautiful; the boy was tall, fair, and handsome, but his movements partook of the irregularity and languor of ill, or at least weakly health; the girl was also fair and delicate, but with an energy and decision of character marking every movement, that deceived even her mother as to her bodily strength. When the "clever family" came to reside at Deerstone, Alfred Erris was nearly seven, and Lucy between eight and nine; and as the two children clung together, gazing at the evolutions of a good-natured macaw, who invariably exercised himself to amuse them, Mrs. Diggons might almost be

excused, when returning Mrs. Erris's visit, for the encomiums she injudiciously passed on their beauty.

"Well, Mrs. Erris, you may certainly be proud of their beauty," she exclaimed; "I never saw two such darlings—loves quite. I should so like my son Robert to paint them; he does such charming things. There is no doubt but, if he chose, he could be an R.A. in three months."

"Alfred draws a little," said Mrs. Erris.

"A little!" repeated Mrs. Diggons. "My dear lady, at his age, Robert copied the cartoons; but I do not wonder at your spoiling such angels. I assure you I had plenty of struggles with myself ere I could make my boys and girls work. I lost the flower of the flock about five years ago—died, sweet child, in six days, of brain fever! A wonderful memory he had, poor darling! could repeat poetry for two hours by my watch, when only eight years old." It never occurred to Mrs. Erris that this had killed him; but she said that though Alfred could not do *that*, he, too, had an excellent memory.

"Which," said the lady, "you must work. Memory of all things, must be cultivated; but I do not wonder at your spoiling such an angel."

Mrs. Erris assured her she did not "spoil" him, and in proof thereof, asserted that he could repeat a great number of Watts' hymns.

"Watts' hymns!" answered Mrs. Diggons, with an irreverent sneer at the purest child poetry of any language, living or dead; "such a creature as that should be able to repeat orations from Shakspeare and Milton."

"In time," said Mrs. Erris, making a secret resolve that he should do so immediately, and beginning to think she had really neglected his education.

"Is he fond of the languages?" continued the lady.

"He has commenced Latin, and learned French and English together orally, I may say," replied the abashed mother.

"Only commenced Latin!" exclaimed Mrs. Diggons in a compassionate tone. "Well, to be sure, he will never *want* it, as they say; but I should have an ambition to see such a noble

creature as that 'far on' in everything; but, perhaps, if he is not much advanced in languages, he is 'well up' in the sciences."

Mrs. Erris was a timid gentle woman, very anxious for her children, and fearful lest they should grow to think she had not done her duty.

"Indeed," she replied blushing, "he hardly knows the meaning of the word. His taste leads him to study; but my good friend, Doctor Graham Russel, says his brain is already too large, and insists so much on air and exercise, and out-door amusements, that my dear boy is backward, rather in absolute study; not that he is ignorant; he knows the names of all the trees and flowers, the"——

"Botanical names?" mildly suggested Mrs. Diggons.

"No; the homely English names and their uses," replied the widow; "remember, he is only seven years old."

"Well, well, ejaculated the lady; I can perfectly understand Dr. Russel's prejudice; he has arrived at that time of life when men look at improvements suspiciously, because they are not of their time. He is an old man; and if I had minded our family physician even in poor Elizabeth's case, ma'am, she'd have been a disgrace to me; that unhappy curve in her spine, he declared arose from sitting so closely to the harp, and she was obliged to recline; but during the three years she laid upon a slightly inclined plane, *she never missed a single lesson*, nor did I yield her any indulgence—never suffered her to have an amusing book. 'No,' I said to the physician; 'since she cannot go on with the harp, she shall be remarkable at something else;' that was my ambition—to have remarkable children. Her nature was soft and gentle, but we hardened it with mathematics and algebra."

This, at the moment, startled Mrs. Erris. She thought of the deformed girl, and her pale, anxious, thoughtful face, from which every ray of joy seemed banished. She had struck her, at first, as being the only one of this "clever family" who was not superficial. Such had been her first impression. But Mrs. Diggons's manner was imposing in more senses than one; and the timid, retiring mother, who had really done her duty by not

overtasking, and yet sufficiently exercising, the infant intellect of her children, felt bitter self-reproach while her new neighbour enumerated the acquirements of her offspring, without calling to mind that one of them had fallen a victim to brain fever, while another was deformed for life.

Alfred and Lucy Erris were invited to spend a day with the family at Deerstone; and—instead of the canter on the pony, the race on the upland lawn, the hoop and merry play, which are the healthy relaxations of healthful children, and which they had expected with an interest that was a pleasure in itself—there was a grand show-off of science, a parade of hard names, a display of precocious understanding, or rather its distorted shadow, which made Alfred and Lucy uncomfortable, and Alfred for the first time in his life thoughtful of display, and straining after effect which rendered him unnatural. Mrs. Erris, who dined there, felt thoroughly ashamed of her children. One young Diggons painted, another excelled in languages, another made crude poetry, which, though correct in numbers, was without idea; and as to the "ologies," hard words, and parroted sentences, there was no end of them! Poor Mrs. Erris wondered why she had suffered her beautiful boy—who looked like a Grecian statue amid plaster and rough stone images—to display his ignorance, and internally resolved to adopt Mr. Diggons's plan, and abridge his hours of play and exercise, that he might "make the most of TIME"—a duty doubtless; but let the *how* to make the most of this gold from God be well considered, before the vainest and most injurious of all vain-glories, that of making "show-children," is attempted.

In accordance with her determination, Mrs. Erris dismissed her son's tutor (whom Mr. Diggons had pronounced "merely a classic") for one who was "classical and scientific"—a hard stern man, with an iron constitution; and directed Lucy's governess to "keep her at work" under the tutor's direction. There was no difficulty in making these children study—no difficulty in getting them to rise in the morning; their docile and intelligent minds were open to receive, and fertile to produce. In natural capabilities, they were far superior to their

showy neighbours; and their moral and thinking qualities were far beyond those of Mr. Diggons's offspring. Alfred was indeed a boy of the noblest qualities, entering into the spirit of history, comprehending and analysing, idealising, too, until his dry, hot hand, flushed cheek, and throbbing brow, would have warned any teacher of feeling and observation that it was time to lay by the book and the pen, and away into the bright fields, and among the joy-creating and health-giving beauties of nature. And yet this tutor loved the boy; he delighted in him, because he delighted in learning, and because he felt no express fatigue in poring over the world of knowledge, which delighted him more and more every day. He knew that he was the only son of an ancient house, and that much depended on him; and he thought how fine it would be to see him carry the highest honours at Oxford—to feel that he would be more distinguished by his talents and his learning than by the ordinary position he would hold in society by virtue of family and wealth.

Lucy was with her brother in all his tasks, taming down her wildness of spirit to assist his labours, and stimulating his exertions, which were anything but childish. The "clever family" were a fair example of the fashion and display of information—they imitated rather than laboured. This was particularly the case with the healthier portion, who, like their parents, were superficial; but Alfred and Lucy had hearts, feelings, and intellect of the finest texture, an intense love of study, an appreciation of the beautiful, a desire to excel, which, being once awakened, never again slept. They were precisely the children whose minds should have been strengthened rather than taxed, and whose bodies should have been invigorated by air, exercise, and much rest.

Mrs. Erris, astonished at their progress, which she was vain enough to exhibit to the Diggonses, partly from gratitude that *they* had roused her to urge forward her children, was so delighted at the rapidity with which Alfred mastered every difficulty, that she desired to make Dr. Russel confess she was right and he was wrong as to the management of her son especially. Since the commencement of her new system, she had

had with him but one conversation on the subject, and that had certainly left a painful impression on both their minds. She framed, however, some trifling excuse for calling at the manor-house; and after a brief interview with the squire, who had been so much annoyed at her obliging her son to forego his pony exercise to devote more time to study, that he was cold and even stately to the widow of one he had loved like his own child, she sought the doctor in his favourite conservatory.

The doctor was cold enough also, but one of his peculiarities was his being unable to persevere in anything like coldness towards a lady.

"I wanted you to dine with me to-morrow, my good friend," she said; "indeed, I wished our lord of the manor to come also, but he has received me so strangely, that I had not courage to ask him."

"We are two old-fashioned old men, my dear Mrs. Erris," replied the doctor; "but somehow you have got new-fangled of late, and we should not be able to avoid finding fault—one of the bad habits common to old friends; so that, perhaps, under these circumstances, it is better for us to stay away."

"I know what you mean," answered Mrs. Erris, gently; "you allude to Alfred and Lucy. I want you to come and judge for yourself; I want you to *see* how they are improved: that, in fact, is all I desire. I want you to examine the children of your old friend, and I think you will be satisfied that I have done my duty."

"I am quite satisfied you have *intended* to do your duty, my dear lady—quite satisfied of that; and if it had not been for the stimulus given to your maternal vanity by the arrival of this 'clever family,' I am certain you would have continued blessing and being blessed—not overtasking, but permitting your children's minds, as well as their bodies, to strengthen while they grow. But we shall not agree upon the matter, my dear Mrs. Erris; so, perhaps, we had better not talk of it—we shall certainly not agree upon the subject."

"You were the friend my poor husband valued most on earth," said Mrs. Erris, after a pause; "and I cannot bear that

you should labour under any false impression. I assure you neither Lucy nor Alfred are ever driven to their tasks."

"So much the worse for children of their rapid yet delicate natures. If they had a disinclination to study, it would prove that their minds were not of a quality to injure their bodies; but the zeal for study requires to be regulated."

"And Mr. Salon does regulate it," said the mother.

"By increasing it," replied the doctor. "The structure of these precocious minds is easily disorganised. It has always seemed to me as extraordinary as unjust, that parents and teachers bestow double the pains upon what are termed *clever* children than they do upon those who are dull of comprehension; whereas the heavier minds could be wrought upon with far greater safety, and in nine cases out of ten would produce, if not a richer, a more abundant fruitage."

"But," urged Mrs. Erris, "you are arguing as if my children were suffering from too much mental exertion. I assure you the contrary is the case. Mrs. Diggons said she never saw anything in her children like the energy with which my children apply."

"I daresay she did not," replied the doctor. "In the first place, your tutor imparts *knowledge*, not its semblance; and in the next, your children have really a panting after information, a gasping for the beautiful and the ideal—a naturally poetic temperament, which destroys ten for the one it crowns. I remember Alfred restless in his cradle, and weeping at melancholy music; and as to Lucy, the difficulty with her was always to keep her tranquil. You have applied excitement where you should, in my humble opinion, have removed it."

"But would you have had them grow up in ignorance?"

"That is so like a woman," said the old bachelor, smiling sadly. "The children were doing well—learning as much as at their age they ought to learn without forcing; that is all that children should do."

"But some learn more quickly than others, my dear sir."

"So they do; some require keeping back, others bringing forward; but, with both, *time is the only safe developer and*

strengthener. I never knew an instance where a precocious child was not the better for being kept back. It is positively offensive to come in contact with those forced children. Well, my dear lady," he added, ashamed of his pettishness, "I have, at least, to thank you for your patience; you have listened to me, and I thank you. I will go, if you please, to-morrow, if it were only to prove how I value your forbearance; but just look at our flowers, and this new forcing-house, which, I think, you have not seen, and which our gardener would have, because the clever family have one"

Mrs. Erris looked at the flowers. On leaving the conservatory for the forcing-house, they found the gardener busied with some plants that had been placed upon a stand; among them was a white moss-rose, its green leaves fading: the buds, through whose soft moss the faint streak of light was more or less visible, hung their heads, from their feeble and seemingly twisted stems.

"It won't do, Tom—all your care won't do *now*," said Dr. Russel to the gardener: "if you had been content to urge, not force the plant, it might have lived and flourished. Now it is gone—gone for ever."

"It was so beautiful, sir," said the man; "I never saw anything more beautiful. I didn't like to be outdone in early flowering by Mr. Diggons's gardener, and got more heat on; and I'm sorry to say this is not the first plant that has served me so—the blossoms have dropped off many; so that, after all my care, and though willing to *sacrifice the plant for one good flowering, it won't* always give *that, but die away—right away*."

"The rose would have been healthy enough in the conservatory, I suppose," said the doctor.

"Bless you, sir! it would have lived long enough to make a timber tree, if I wanted it; but such fierce forcing cuts them off even before they blossom. It's a principle in nature, sir; my old governor never would have anything forced beyond nature. 'Thomas,' he used to say to me, 'let us help nature; let us assist the old gentlewoman as well as we can—she deserves it of us; and it is our duty, as well as our interest, to keep friends with

her; for there's one thing certain, she won't stand no nonsense. He was a plain-spoken Scotchman, sir; but, like all of his country, he had a great acquaintance with Nature."

The doctor made no further observation; but a glance at Mrs. Erris showed him that her face was bathed in tears.

PART THE SECOND.

THREE years had elapsed since the master of East-court manor let Deerstone house to the "clever family;" and he had more than once hinted to his confidential servant, Isaac Heywood, his belief that he did not think a pair of lawyers could have proved more injurious than its inhabitants to the repose of the neighbourhood; for, without improving, they had thoroughly unsettled, the course of instruction. As Dr. Russel observed, "they had inoculated the whole country with a mental nettle-rash."

Mr. Diggons's daughter Elizabeth, who had so long struggled with, or rather submitted to, the spinal affection, which her

mother declared should never interfere with her education, died eighteen months after their residence at Deerstone. Yet did not this young woman's fate act as a warning to Mrs. Erris.

Alfred had become one of those extraordinary boys who dazzle yet satisfy—a creature so bright, so glorious, in noting whom, you instinctively pray that a life may be spared to those who live upon its continuance. All observed, except his mother and her new friends, that he outgrew his strength; his eyes beamed with a deep yet brilliant intelligence; they were eyes that flashed and burned; and the delicate tint upon his cheek occasionally flushed into a concentrated crimson spot. It is true he took exercise. He would spring upon a beautiful little Arabian horse that had succeeded his pony, and away; using more violent exertion in one hour than he ought to have done in four; and then return over-fatigued, to persuade himself and his mother that "exercise was not good for him."

Fortune smiled on this favourite of nature. A baronetcy, held by a distant branch of the family, became his by inheritance: and a large amount in money and estate came with it. Most exceeding joy followed. Alfred was now the last of his race—the very last male of the family who bore the name of Erris—and those who looked upon him, and those who more particularly knew him, thought all that was high and glorious centred in him. Some time after the news had spread, and when the fever of congratulations and arrangements had somewhat subsided, Lucy and her brother were together in a little temple, called especially "their own." Alfred was fourteen, unusually tall, and formed for his age; and Lucy might have passed for younger than she was, except that she had quite tamed down her wild spirit, and sometimes looked more thoughtful than girls who have numbered many more than her years. They were seated side by side, reading from the same book silently. There was this difference in their way of reading: when Alfred met with anything that particularly struck him, his cheek reddened, his eye dilated, *triumphed*, I might say, in the glory of the writer, and he would silently point it out to Lucy. She, on

the contrary, read aloud to him whatever pleased her, and did not seem to enjoy anything unless he enjoyed it with her.

He had the same feeling towards her, though, as I have said, it was differently expressed, and would lay his finger on the page, and their eyes would meet—his full of light, hers hardly venturing an expression of their own, until she had scanned his. Sometimes he could not bear even the whisper of her silver voice; he seemed to think that sound disturbs feeling, and that it is only the eye which should drink in the written words of mighty men; and then, without another word, she would remain hushed, rewarded by a smile or a pressure of her brother's hand for her desire to give him pleasure, by sympathising in his delights—the greatest pleasure youth knows. The attachment of these two young creatures was perfect. He was full of dreams of ambition - ambition of the most lofty yet generous character. The youth joyed exceedingly in his new position, but he joyed still more in what was far beyond his years—in philosophy, in poetry, which he delighted in translating from one language to another, and in all things abstruse as well as beautiful. His disposition was sweet and generous; and when an irritability, which had increased of late so as to give even his mother much concern, caused him to say or do anything that was painful or unjust to the humblest servant, he apologised at once with so much warmth and regret, as to win affection even by his very fault. Like those beautiful flowers which, born of the sun, die by the sun, his very soul opened to the heat and fever of the light of knowledge, and the more expanded the flower became, the nearer it approached its end. Every one saw this *now*, except those whom it most concerned. The occasional fits of lassitude which succeeded much mental or bodily exertion, his mother attributed to his overgrowth, not to any other cause —to be cured by soups and jellies, and the old-fashioned tonic of "bark and port-wine," which Mrs. Diggons prevailed upon her to exchange for claret. His tutor felt towards this wondrous boy as a skilful mechanist would towards an automaton, upon the construction of which he had expended an existence. Lucy was certainly the only one who *felt* that the youth was not well;

but she never thought of *him* and death together. There had been much talk of sending him to Oxford with his tutor, and even that separation his devoted sister could not bear to think of. Before those children had been given up to such intense study, Lucy had laid in a greater store of strength than her brother, consequently she had not suffered so severely. Her anxiety for him wore her more than her studies, though much that he learned she learned with him; still, particularly during the last fifteen months, she had ceased to be the object of even divided attention. Mrs. Erris's whole soul seemed wound up in the young baronet. If he had been wild, and wilful, and careless of his studies, he might most likely not have continued so; for he was certain of being distinguished; and that was too surely her ambition. But though she ceased to urge forward, she had not endeavoured to hold back, and the influence of the "clever family" was undiminished.

"Close the book, dearest brother," said Lucy, as she wiped his damp brow with her handkerchief. "Do close it; the sun has set, and you came from the library for relaxation." A gesture of impatience was his answer, and she continued by his side, now smiling to his smile, and sometimes watching the glorious hues of the clouds—the good night of the sun to his attendant vapours.

Alfred closed his book with a heavy sigh; and leaning back on his sister's shoulder, so that he looked up into her face, he exclaimed, "There, Lucy! I have done, at least until the lamps are lit in the study. Shall we walk now? I ought to have thought of your walk before, you who have been working with me all day; and girls cannot work like men!"

Lucy smiled. "Well, *boys*, then," added her brother, understanding the smile. "Boys, if you call me so. Boy as I am, Mr. Salon says I shall do myself credit at Oxford; I will not be a mere bookworm there either, dear Lucy. I hope to be a statesman, one who will govern the future. I must, as my dear mother says, for the honour of——But, oh dear, there is that pain in my side again, as if the very idea of anything but books brought it there." They stood up.

"Is it better now, Alfred?" inquired Lucy, gazing earnestly into her brother's face; "is it, dearest?"

"Yes—no," answered the boy. "Let us walk." In another moment they were on the terrace.

"What a beautiful evening is this, dear Lucy; and what a glorious world to live in; with power, and wealth, and rank, all handmaids to do my bidding! You know we are to build the alms-houses down there; they are to be *yours*, Lucy; and I think I shall found a college, only I wish the *great* estate was not so far from East-in-Rest, I love this place so dearly. Ay! there are the stars coming out one by one. When I am of age I will build an observatory on the top of the hill."

"What! the squire's hill?" said his sister.

"Ah, ah, I forgot that! Do you know, Lucy, that all this new wealth so bewilders me, that I feel as if everything I looked on must be mine; and, oh! if it were, would I not make a happy, happy world? Now, dear Lucy, while I think of it, do go and ask old Charles to carry the telescope to the hill-top; there is hardly a cloud to hide a single star, and we will spend a couple of delightful hours in computing transits and distances." Away flew Lucy; but ere she had gone a dozen yards, she paused and turned back.

"Alfred, you were in the study many hours to-day; you complain of pain in your side; your dear hands are hot and moist, and your lips dry: it will tire you to climb the hill-side—the dew is falling."

"You are unkind, Lucy," answered the impatient boy. "You know that those stars are to me worlds of delight. Well, I will call Charles myself" This his sister would not permit, and in a few minutes she returned with his cloak on her arm. As if to atone for his little pettishness, he put on the cloak immediately; and, leaving the garden by a wicket-gate, they crossed the road, and ascended the hill by one of those winding paths which they had often traversed when very young. The servants preceded them; and, accustomed as they were to the grace and beauty of these two children, who had grown up under their eyes, Charles, the old white-headed butler, could not avoid turn

ing back frequently to look at them, as they wound up the hill, arm twined in arm ; Lucy, like the spirit of a zephyr, so slight and wand-like, round which the soft muslin drapery floated like a cloud, yet still able to support her brother, upon whose fair brow the cool moonbeams glistened as upon an alabaster orb.

" He's like his father," said the old man ; " like what he was, James,—not in life, but on his death-bed : just so his forehead shone in the lamp-light, when he'd try to read."

" It's seven years before he'll be of age," answered the groom, who was almost as old as the butler ; " but he'll gain strength : horse exercise is the thing for him."

" And claret," added the butler, laying down the heavy stand of the telescope to rest a little.

" Well, both : but he has a fine spirit, our young master ; see now, when he looks down upon the valley, how nobly he turns his head ! Sir Alfred Erris, baronet, that will sound well when he stands for the county."

" Ay, very grand," replied Charles ; " there is a deal in a grand sound." And without further converse, the pair gained the plain on the top of the hill where the telescope was to be placed.

The telescope was fixed where Alfred desired ; the old servants had mastered the rising ground, and made all ready for those they so dearly loved ; and yet the youth and maiden, in the very spring and bound of life, had not reached the mossy platform.

" Dear me, Sir Alfred," said the old coachman, " you are quite out of breath ; lean on me, sir."

" It is all the fault of this cloak that Lucy would make me wear," exclaimed the boy, unfastening it from his gasping throat, and dashing it down ; then he rushed upwards, and sprang upon the mount. His triumph was short-lived : before they could say he stood there a moment, he fell flat upon the sward. It was almost as light as day, so clear was the sky, so bright the stars, and the moon shedding its clear white light over all the country. Lucy knelt, supporting his head on her bosom, and calling on him who heard her not : blood gushed freely from a wound in his temple, which a sharp pebble had inflicted. In their desire for assistance, both the old servants rushed down the hill, leaving

the sister alone with her brother; he soon became conscious of her presence, complaining that he could hardly see, and that his head "turned round."

About seven hours after this accident, which agitated the whole of East-court, Dr. Russel retired from the bedside of the boy upon whom so many hopes rested, and for whom so many prayers were offered; for, independent of the rich inheritance of blessings which descends from noble and righteous ancestry, Alfred was loved and honoured by all who came within the influence of his smile and the bounty of his generous hand. The good old doctor did not leave his favourite until the arrival of two eminent physicians told him it was time to do so. It was determined that they should all meet in the morning; and the light grey twilight was already spreading over the horizon, yet still the kind old man lingered in his study. He was writing, when a tap at the window, which opened on the lawn, arrested his attention; he unfastened it, and there was Lucy.

"Mamma would have me go to bed," she said, "but I could not; she will not rest herself, yet she has sent me from him. I thought you could not sleep when Alfred was so ill, and I flew across the lawn, and came to you, dear friend, for truth, if not for consolation. Is he very ill? Will he be better soon? Will he, my brother, will he soon recover? You turn away your head; there are tears upon your cheek; I see, I understand all that." And she stood before the old man, whose very heart shook within him, like a statue struck dumb by his agonizing silence.

At last he succeeded in placing her in a chair; and having conquered his own emotion, by speaking to her of her brother, induced a violent burst of tears. He mentioned Alfred's youth, change of scene, mild air, and talked of care and a total freedom from study, of rest, of there being decidedly no immediate danger. The former words fell from his lips unnoticed; but the saving from apprehension of *immediate* danger was what effectually recalled Lucy to herself. She fell upon her knees, and blessed her venerable friend with a burst of grateful feeling. She then became more calm, clinging to the assurance that there was "no present danger," as if there were a world of hope

beyond it: and so there was to her. The dread of losing her brother at the time was so appalling, that its terror being removed, the hope of her young heart resumed its pulsations; and the calmness having passed away, she alarmed Dr. Russel by the energy and wildness of her manner. "How foolish we have been to fever ourselves so," she exclaimed, talking rapidly. "No immediate danger! Oh, how I rejoice I came! It was only that which I feared; it is such a fearful thing to see life stopped at once. But I *knew* that could not be. Doctor, when he was bounding by my side, and then fell flat upon the grass, and I could not feel his heart beat, I thought, when I kissed his lips, there was no breath. Oh, how the heavens whirled round while I was alone with him on the hill! But there is no *immediate* danger; and we shall only want time, with God's blessing, doctor, to strengthen him. How we will watch him, and pray for him, and cradle him in luxuries—create an atmosphere for him to live in. *Now* do I rejoice more than ever at his new station and wealth; for, you know, no matter what it is, he can command *all*."

"All but the will of Heaven," observed the old doctor; for he feared, from Lucy's flashing eyes and burning cheeks, which seemed to scorch up the tears she had shed, that her reason reeled. "All but the will of Heaven!" This short sentence supplied Lucy with a new and painful thought. "Tell me," she said eagerly, "did you ever know such as he is—mind, *such as he is*—struck down before the fulfilment of any of the glorious promises of his youth?"

The doctor paused: he knew that in his life he had never seen a youth who would bear comparison with Alfred Erris, and so he told her "he had not." This seemed to afford her great consolation; and, arguing as do untutored spirits that have not been tempered by sorrow, she felt assured, at least for a time, that God would spare him.

One of the physicians, a man of such standing in his profession that he was able to tell the truth without incurring the danger of losing his practice, said, in reply to Mrs. Erris's inquiries, "The illness under which your son is now suffering may be called

what we please, but it has originated in *over-mental excitement*—the brain has been over-worked, over-stimulated."

The poor lady shuddered. "But it is not too late!" she exclaimed, eagerly; "oh, in mercy, do not say it is too late!"

"I hope it is not," he answered, with more feeling than was usual with him. "I trust it is not. I wish I had seen him before."

Mrs. Erris assured him that in every respect she would attend to his instructions, that she would not suffer him to study, that she would send Mr. Salon away for a time, that his books should be put far from him, that he should not think!

The physician arrested her. "You promise what you have not the power to perform," he said; "and parents—all who have influence over the education of youth—would do well to understand and to study the characters and dispositions of their children, before they submit all to the same discipline, the same excitement. The slothful—the slow, who are not slothful; the heavy-headed; the light and trifling, who have no intellectual subsoil—may be safely urged forward; and if their cheeks are pale, and grow anxious, withdraw or lighten the stimulus, and the creature becomes fat and ruddy in a week; not, perhaps, much the better for the forced exertion, though none the worse. But with the ardent, the spiritualised—those who draw inspiration from everything around them; who see and achieve; who are all eye, all ear, whose nerves and hearts do double duty, whose sharpened senses urge them forward—to stimulate them as you do the slow or the merry-minded, is sheer madness."

The physician had forgotten to whom he was speaking; but a pressure of his arm from Dr. Russel's hand recalled him. He saw that Mrs Erris was trembling. her hands clasped, her lips compressed, the damp dews standing on her brow; and, stern as he was, he had pity on her.

In pursuance of his advice, it was at length arranged that the young baronet should go to Italy. The whole of the neighbourhood was moved to one general prayer for his recovery; for if he died, all would pass to one of another name, and of a depraved

and dishonoured character. The venerable master of East-court begged to accompany his sorrowing friends.

"My children always clung to you," said the broken-hearted but grateful mother; "but folly grew with me, and I must bear the punishment, though, God knows, I acted for the best." The wanderers had but one object, the restoration of this precious youth. At first he was much better. His travelling physician and Dr. Russel both agreed there were strong reasons for hope; and Lucy's face would brighten, and her eyes fill with tears of joy, when her brother's voice was stronger, or his step lighter, or his appetite improved. Although keenly appreciating the great and beautiful, this devoted sister saw nothing, heard nothing, but her brother. If it were possible for two creatures to have but one soul, it might have been their case. By day and night she was by his side, warding off the breeze, shading the sun, reading, or singing, or reciting; doing everything he desired; and thinking before one enjoyment was at an end what the next should be;—utterly careless of the sensation created by her own unearthly beauty.

Alfred was better for a few weeks of travel, but no change had the power of restoring the tone and strength destroyed by over-mental exertion. If his mind could have slumbered, so that his body might have continued undisturbed, the youth would have achieved manhood; but his body wasted beneath the scourge of his untiring soul. His nerves were over-strained; he could not sleep; he was consumed by a low wasting fever. His restlessness would have worn out any one but Lucy.

"If," said the travelling physician to his friend—"if *he* endure much longer, *she* will go first." And yet, whether it was that the certainty Alfred always expressed as to his own recovery, or the belief Lucy hourly expressed to herself, that "God would not take him from the world," occasioned her blindness, she did not see what her mother dared not speak of. The youth had grown much worse, and yet was telling his mother of his future plans, all tending to the advancement of others, and mingling the beautiful, the prosperous, and the good together, in a most un-

worldly way, when their good friend of East-court entered with an open letter in his hand, his face brightened by one of his old looks of happiness: "Good news," he said, "a letter from Master Isaac, stating that Mr. Diggons wishes to have Deerstone taken off his hands."

"They were very kind to me," said Alfred; "and yet I am glad. Oh, send them away at once! and then, mamma, let us go home. Do, mother, take me home!" This appeal was answered by a burst of tears from his mother, for, while speaking, he stretched forth his hands towards her, and the light being rather strong upon them, shone almost through them. Oh, how attenuated! They were transparent! yet firmly clasped together, while the boy again entreated, "Oh, mother, take me home!"

"How you all look!" exclaimed Lucy, twining her ready arm around his neck, and gazing in his flushed face. "Yes, dearest Alfred, there is no need for this excitement; we will go home immediately, if you like, if the doctors say you are strong enough for the journey."

"I am strong enough," he said, half rising from the sofa. "I want to be at home; that is all I want now. I have had rest and change; and now I wish to get to work again. Time is passing. I want my books. If you let me have my books, I can sleep. Look how strong I am. Stand with me, Lucy, that they may see me walk. There!"

He stood for a moment by his sister's side, she still gazing in his face; and the brightness of the sunbeams, that came through the half-open window, played like a glory round their heads.

"Now, dearest mother, will you not take me home; home to England?"

Lucy felt the arm of her brother relax its hold; she clasped him more closely—closer still. "Alfred!" she whispered: "Alfred!" He was on the sofa, but she still clasped him. Her lips moved, but no sound escaped them. She heard not her mother's screams nor the more collected words of her friends. Still Lucy gazed into those "windows of the

soul;" they were open still, but their light, their might, was gone.

Some time passed, and though every day it was said at Nice that the English lady and suite, whose beautiful son died, as she thought, suddenly, would leave the following day, they were still there. Since her brother's death, Lucy shed no tear, spoke no word. The last sound she uttered was "Alfred." She knew no one. Move her, she did not resist. Gentle and passive, she made neither sign nor complaint; did not return her mother's tearful caresses, nor observe when, at last, she was placed in the carriage to return home. This "living death" roused her mother; but nothing seemed to awaken her, until, when the day after they returned to East-in-Rest, Doctor Russel took her to the pavilion in the garden, where her childhood passed so happily with her brother. She shed a few tears from this time. Her consciousness returned in some degree, though she never mentioned her brother's name. She would occasionally murmur over snatches of the poems they read together, and listen when the Bible was read to her. She sank, however, daily—imperceptibly; smiling, as her end drew nigh, in a sweet, unearthly way, on those around her, all gentleness and love. Once, drawing Doctor Russel's head close to her, so close that his long white hair mingled with the rich brown tresses that wreathed her throat and shoulders, she whispered, "I can say now, *thy* will be done!" and thus she departed.

Those who visit the sweet village of East-court now, will find it changed. The old manor house, though still inhabited by a family of the name of Russel, who are greatly respected, talk of their good uncle, whose monument has been lately placed in the church. But what chiefly attracts the eye, is the gloomy aspect of the house called East-in-Rest. Every window is closed; and the escutcheon above the entrance has remained there so long, that it is garlanded, as if in mockery, by roses and other climbing plants, wild, and untrimmed for years. The lady of the house, the people say, a childless widow, resides there, and is sometimes seen wandering amid the tangled walks, for nothing

has been trimmed since her children died; passing silently along, or, if she speaks to any, it is to some mother with children around her, whom she entreats earnestly, as if pleading for her own life, "not to force the flower—not to force the flower prematurely."

THE MOSSPITS.

IN one of the most highly cultivated counties of England, near a town, the name of which I shall conceal under that of Moudrich, the following circumstances occurred. My tale is but a simple narration, and has little to recommend it but its reality. To those who yearn after exaggerated pictures of life, in any situation, it

may be dull and tedious; but those who can appreciate the sufferings and struggles of virtue, under trials of a more than ordinary nature, will, I doubt not, feel interested in the story I am about to relate.

"Well, good night, Mr. Hinton, good night; we are neighbours now, and shall often meet," said Edward Hoskins, as he closed the cottage-door after his retreating guest. "A very pleasant fellow, Agnes," he continued, addressing his wife: "though you were not particularly civil to him, I know who was;" and his bright blue eye rested for a moment on his sister-in-law—a merry-looking maiden, busied in assisting Agnes Hoskins in placing aside the remains of their frugal supper.

"For shame, Ned!" retorted the blushing Jessy; "but you are ever teasing me in some way or other; and here's my sister says it is very wrong to be putting such things into my head."

Agnes turned her handsome, cheerful countenance towards her sister, and observed, in a low and more serious tone of voice than was her wont, "Jessy, I should be indeed sorry if anything got into either your head or your heart which it would be necessary to root out again."

"Well," laughed Edward, "I don't see what harm Harry Hinton's getting into her head, or heart either, could do; he is a good-tempered, free, frank, industrious"——

"Stop there, Edward," interrupted his wife, laying her hand on his arm, "not industrious—surely, not industrious!"

"No; perhaps not that exactly," replied Ned, "not what you would call industrious. But, really, Agnes, I think we both work too hard;—we ought, as Harry says, to take a little pleasure now and then, and we should return to our daily labour with more earnestness, and do all the better for it."

"I don't think we need do better: your situation at the manor, the produce of your own little farm—all contribute to render us independent. And as to pleasure—as to happiness, Ned, look here!"

She drew aside a large linen cloth that fell from the upper part of her baby's cradle, so as to shade it from the light. Although the little thing had not cried, it was awake; and, as

the father stooped to kiss it, the hands were stretched forward to meet him, and the rosy lips parted by the light noiseless laughter of earliest infancy! It was a blessed moment: both parents gazed upon their child, and as the mother placed it to her bosom, the father said, in a subdued tone, "You are right, Agnes; thank God, we are happy; and though, love, as you were better brought up than I was, I should like to be richer for your sake, yet somehow I think it shows you to more advantage, and draws you more into my heart, to be as you are. What the minister said of you was true, though I did not mean to tell it you, lest it might make you conceited:—'Your wife, Hoskins,' said he, 'is never without a jar of honey, and a flask of oil, to sweeten and soften your path through life.'"

"Reach down the Bible, Jessy; although it is past ten, we must not go to bed without our chapter," observed Agnes, after a long pause. "But what books are placed upon it, Jessy?"

"A volume of songs and a novel, sister."

Agnes continued, in a reproving tone, "I thought I had no need to tell you that *that* shelf was appropriated to the Bible, Prayer, and Hymn-book only; profane and sacred things should never mingle."

"It was not Jessy, but Hinton, who put them there," said Edward. Agnes sighed. "Why do you sigh so heavily?" inquired the husband, as he turned over the leaves to find one of his wife's favourite chapters.

"Because it confirms my opinion of our new neighbour; the word of God will ever be treated by a true Christian with outward respect—the proof of inward reverence. One who venerates Scripture could not rest a song-book even upon its binding."

Edward made no reply, and soon afterwards the party retired to rest.

This little passage in the lives of these humble individuals occurred about the latter end of the month of April, a few years ago, in a retired spot, near the town of Moudrich, to which I shall give the name of Mosspits. It was a sweet and quiet nesting of five cottages, inhabited, with one exception, by happy industrious people. Four of these dwellings were joined together;

the fifth, the abode of Hoskins, stood apart, surrounded by a blossoming garden, and was of a larger size than any of the others. The scene might be aptly described as—

> "A gentle, lonely place; the path o'ergrown
> With primroses, and broad-leaved violets,
> Arched by laburnums and the sweet woodbine.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Across the green a silver streamlet ran,
> Hidden and silent, as it feared to wake
> The deep tranquillity that dwelt and slept
> Even on the full-leaved trees."

It was far away from the public road, and one large oak spread its huge branches over the green in front of the Mosspit cottages; the trunk was surrounded by a rustic seat, where the inhabitants met every fine evening, and discussed affairs of state or business with the affected sagacity of wiser heads. Hoskins possessed, as his wife had said, a lucrative situation—one that gave them abundant comforts, and would, if carefully husbanded, enable them to lay by a provision for after years.

Agnes and Jessy were the orphan daughters of a Presbyterian clergyman. Mrs. Hoskins was some years older than her giddy sister, and had enjoyed, during her father's lifetime, many advantages which he did not remain long enough in the world to bestow upon his youngest-born. Agnes had been chosen by the lady of the manor, Mrs. Cecil Wallingford, as a humble, *very* humble, companion for her daughter—an only child, and an heiress: she was therefore, to use the accepted phrase, "comfortably situated;" which, being interpreted, means, that she had her board, washing, and lodging, and the young lady's society when she was ill or without company—dined with the housekeeper—rode either inside the carriage when her *friend* pleased, or outside on the dicky when ditto - curled the lap-dog's hair—and sometimes suffered, under the practical jokes of her young tormentor, such mortifications as nought but her enduring spirit could have supported—was stared at whenever seen, by the young men, who already scented the heiress's gold afar off—and received divers lessons from Mrs. Cecil Wallingford, not on

errors she had committed, but on those which the lady supposed she might commit. The dependent on this purse-proud family could not have been strictly called beautiful; but there was that about her which surpassed beauty—a kind, yet animated countenance, illumined by mild and frequently upturned eyes, which lent a sort of holy expression to her delicate features. Under her after-trials it seemed almost as if a heavenly communion supported her; for while the tear trembled in her eye, the smile sprang to her lip, and she regained her serenity apparently without an effort.

Agnes was fortunate enough to make one real friend in this mighty family. The housekeeper, Mrs. Middleton, was a curate's widow, and felt much and kindly for the situation of one so young and unprotected; she did all she could to soften the innumerable mortifications that awaited the pure and delicately-minded girl; and often, when the household had retired to rest, they would seek each other's chamber, and hold sweet counsel together—thus imparting cheerfulness to the aged, and instruction to the young. When Agnes had been about twelve months at the manor, Edward Hoskins was strongly recommended, on account of his great skill in horticulture and floriculture, to the situation of gardener in Mrs. Cecil Wallingford's establishment, vacant by the death of the old man who had exercised unbounded dominion over grapery, pinery, and green-house, for nearly half a century. Hoskins wisely brought with him a new carnation of his own growing, which had gained the first prize of the Horticultural Society. The splendid flower decided the matter, and he was immediately engaged, at a salary of a hundred and ten guineas per annum, (as the lady found he could not only act as gardener, but as steward,) and the very prettiest cottage at Mosspit was appointed for his residence.

All was bustle in the servants' hall as the handsome young gardener talked for a moment with the head butler. The lady's-maid and chief house-duster positively quarrelled as to the right of first setting caps at him; though they both agreed that he behaved very rudely in passing into the housekeeper's room without bestowing the slightest notice upon their pretty persons.

Mrs. Middleton and her young friend were quietly seated at tea, when the butler respectfully asked permission to introduce the new resident. Long after Agnes had departed, he lingered, and lingered, and at last asked who the young lady was. Her history was soon told; and, to dismiss all matters of courtship briefly, they were soon married. To do Mrs. Cecil Wallingford justice, she behaved very generously to her *protegée* on the occasion, presented to the young couple some neat and appropriate furniture, stood godmother to their first infant, and Miss Cecil Wallingford (when sentimentally inclined) always talked of love in the Mosspit cottage, and her sweet humble friend Agnes Hoskins.

Much had been, of course, said, at the commencement of their union, as to the probability of Agnes being too dainty a damsel to make a useful wife; but a little time proved the incorrectness of such surmises. Hoskins insisted on Agnes domesticating her only sister with them, and went for her to Scotland, where she had previously resided with a distant relative. No further help than Jessy's was necessary to keep all things in order, and no dwelling, even at the Mosspits, was half so neat or half so cheerful as their cottage. Indeed, cheerfulness was Agnes' peculiar attribute—that sweet, gentle, and unobtrusive cheerfulness, which is *felt* rather than seen. Her very voice told of happiness; her eyes beamed with faith and love; and the minister's description of one of the favourites of his flock was no less beautiful than true. The disposition of Jessy was not so valuable as that of her sister; she was more mirthful, more gay, and, alas! both giddy and inconsiderate; but then, as Edward kindly observed, "she was only seventeen, and every body could not be perfect like Agnes, who certainly was different from every one else."

It is a happy thing when married folk believe perfection enthroned in each other; but it is a wise thing when they see each other's faults, and yet endeavour to conceal them. It is a stern test of a woman's judgment, if she discover her mental superiority to the lord of her affections, and yet, while she secretly manages all things for the best, makes the world believe

she is only the instrument of his will. A wise woman *will* do this, but it is only a wise woman who *can*.

Edward was certainly inferior to Agnes in intellect; and yet, woman though she was, she never allowed her mind to rest upon the circumstance she could not avoid perceiving. *She* was a superior woman - *he* was only an ordinary man, but one in whom all kind elements were so happily blended, that his faults were forgotten in the contemplation of his better qualities. The great difference in their characters was, that Edward acted invariably from impulse—Agnes from principle.

My friends will remember that my little tale commenced in the gentle month of April, the kindly season sung of by the elegant Surrey, as—

> "The soote season, that bud and blome forth brings,
> With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale;
> The nightingale with feathers new she sings,
> The turtle to her mate hath told her tale."

And, passing over the first two months of summer, we reach the latter end of July. Although nothing had occured of a nature to destroy the actual quiet of the Mosspit family, many trifling incidents had filled the mind of Agnes with an apprehension for which she could not account, and dreaded to encourage. Harry Hinton was always so coolly received by her that he spent very little time at their cottage; and Agnes was continually on the watch to prevent any intimacy between Jessy and their idle neighbour. Still it was almost certain that the thoughtless girl regarded Harry with anything but indifference; and the proximity of their dwellings rendered it impossible to prevent their meeting. If Jessy took her little nephew into the garden, Hinton was most likely in his; if she stood at the door, Hinton passed it; if she went for water to the well, Hinton would carry the pitcher, at all events, as far as the great tree that shaded them from observation; and, above all, Agnes could not make either her husband or her sister think otherwise than well of Harry Hinton. Edward did not spend his evenings as constantly at home as before his acquaintance with his neighbour; Mrs.

Cecil Wallingford complained that her grapes were not so fine as they had been; and the clergyman called one morning to reprimand her husband for being absent from Sabbath worship Agnes witnessed the reproof, and heard also—what shocked her still more—her Edward utter a decided falsehood as to the cause. She knew that he had gone with Hinton, under some pretext or other, two successive Sundays to the next market-town; and when he stated he had been compelled, through the negligence of the under-gardener, to remain at the Manor while he should have been at church, his wife's face was suffused with the blush of shame, and she left their little sitting-room with a sense of degradation both new and unsupportable to a mind like hers. The bed-room to which she retired was at the back of the house, and her child, who hourly improved in strength and beauty, was sleeping calmly on the snowy coverlet. The open window was literally curtained with roses and woodbine, through which the sunbeams could not penetrate; her fingers wandered amid their foliage, while her tearful gaze was fixed upon her boy; and she started as from a dream when the clear merry laugh of Jessy rang upon her ear: it did not harmonize with her feelings, and it was followed by words still more painful.

"You need not be afraid to speak to me, Jessy; your sister is too much occupied with the parson to heed you just now; and I long for the time that will make you mine, and remove you from her tyranny."

"Agnes is no tyrant, Harry," replied the maiden, "only a little strict; and I wish you would let me tell her——"

"What?" inquired Hinton, after waiting for some time the conclusion of Jessy's speech—"What do you want to tell her?—that I'm your lover?—why, silly lass, she knows that already!"

"Not that exactly, but—"

"But, what?"

"I should like to tell her what you think of our laws, and of the rights of men and women; and about that good gentleman in London, who proves we are all equal, and—"

"That you have as good a right to wear satin and gold, and

ride in a coach, as Mrs. Cecil Wallingford herself; but Agnes would not believe you, Jessy; her mind is not comprehensive like yours."

"O, Harry—Harry!" exclaimed the thoughtless girl, at the conclusion of her lover's speech; "how nice I should look in white satin and French curls! It is very hard that Agnes will persist in making me band my hair like a Methodist; but I cannot think I have as good a right to ride in a coach as Mrs. Wallingford; because, you know, all her relations keep carriages—and—mine—"

The sentence was left unfinished; but Hinton soon satisfied her scruples, as to Mrs. Cecil Wallingford and the carriage, by an encomium on her beauty, a reiterated assurance of what he termed *love*, and a present, which, first having received—secondly, having admired—thirdly. and lastly, she did not know what to do with.

"I don't think Agnes would let me wear such a beautiful brooch; and I am sure she would not permit me to take a present from you, Harry."

"You need not say anything about it."

"But Agnes might see it."

"Then tell her you found it."

Breathlessly did Agnes Hoskins wait for the reply, but she heard it not—the lovers had passed the window, and walked on. Almost on the instant her husband entered the room, with an air of boisterous gaiety, and, as if he had quite forgotten the clergyman's visit, rallied his wife upon the seriousness of her looks. She felt too much, and too deeply, to reply even with her usual smile. He took no notice of her change of manner—probably from a wish to avoid a recurrence to what he knew must have given her much pain—but fondled and kissed his child, and, taking it in his arms, was leaving the apartment, when Jessy quickly passed the door. "Stay, Edward;—sister, come here!" exclaimed Agnes. Jessy did come, with a flushed cheek and a downcast eye.

"What have you this moment put into your bosom?" inquired Agnes; adding, without waiting for a reply, "I will not induce

you to utter the falsehood you have been directed to—where is the brooch that young Hinton gave you but now under this window? You tremble—you turn pale. Jessy, my sister Jessy! when you crouched beside the heather and the harebell at our father's feet, while the sun was sinking amid the hills of our own Scotland—there, at the cottage door, when our aged parent taught you to lift up your *then* innocent hands to the Almighty in prayer and praise—I little thought you would have so soon forgotten his precepts!"

The thoughtless girl burst into tears, and Edward, whose good-nature was an active, not a passive quality, kindly took her hand, and, looking at his wife, said, "Do not be so angry, Agnes, at her receiving a love token; Harry meant no harm—that I'll answer for. Surely, if he is to be her husband——"

"*Her* husband!" repeated Agnes, with an energy that startled both Edward and Jessy—"the husband of Jessy Grey! I would rather shroud her for her coffin, than see her married to a man devoid of religious and moral principle."

"You are strangely prejudiced against poor Harry, and a thousand times more Methodistical than ever, Agnes," observed her husband.

"I am not Methodistical, Edward—I am not changed—it is you who think differently; and as the change has marred our happiness, you cannot wonder at my disliking him who has wrought it. You were independent, industrious, and happy: you now talk of the wealth of your superiors; you say it is wrong for them to possess so much, and yet *you* covet more. Edward, now you seldom smile—or smile so that I would almost rather see you weep: if you attend the village church, your eyes and mind wander from your devotions, and you rejoice at the conclusion of the service. The flowers in our garden are neglected——"

"Stop, Agnes!" interrupted Hoskins, "you have lectured me pretty sharply, I think, for nothing. Have I ever suffered you to want?—have I ever treated you unkindly?"

"Oh, no!—no, Edward, not unkindly—not that *yet!*"

"And never will, my own Agnes! I will be more with you,

and show you how much you have wronged me, and Jessy too, by these misunderstandings."

"I will speak to my sister apart, Edward; give her the infant. There, Jessy, do not weep!"

Jessy left the room in tears. "Now, in truth, Agnes," said Hoskins, when the door was closed, "your prejudices are amazing to me: there is not a better-hearted fellow in the world than Harry, or a more clever. I own that he thinks a little too freely; and you women don't understand that: the people are improving."

"Would," ejaculated Agnes, "that they felt Christianity to be their best legacy, and inherited the virtue of their ancestors."

"The very thing Harry says: he vows the landlords grow worse and worse; and unless the people take them in hand, there'll be no end to their tyranny."

"Did you ever experience any tyranny, Edward?"

"Never, Agnes."

"Did Hinton?"

"No—but yes, he did, poor fellow, and that no later than last week. 'Squire Nicol's fox-hounds and the whole hunt went right through his barley. But that is not the worst of it; when he lived near Chester, his sister ran off with, and was deserted by, his landlord's eldest son."

"I am not surprised at that," replied Agnes, coolly, "if he instructed his sister in the principles of equality and rights of women. *She* only practised what *he* preached."

Agnes then proceeded to state to her husband the conversation that had passed between Jessy and Harry Hinton: in natural but forcible colours she portrayed the danger of his principles, aided by his insinuating manners, and concluded with a request that Edward would at once relinquish so dangerous an acquaintance. Hoskins was much shocked at the idea that Hinton should have breathed such notions into the ear of the innocent girl, whom he loved with all the warmth of brotherly affection; he promised his wife that he would speak seriously to him on the subject, and unite with her in endeavouring to break off his connexion with Jessy Grey, whom Agnes declared she would send

on a visit to an aged relative of her friend Mrs. Middleton, who dwelt near the Scottish border.

"I think your plan is best; absence and time will soon put love out of her head," observed Edward.

"It *may* do so, and I hope it most fervently," was the wife's reply; and again she entreated her husband, even with tears, to avoid Hinton.

"I promise you faithfully so much, Agnes; but circumstances which I cannot explain will oblige me to see him occasionally—in fact, I am in his secrets; and it would be ungenerous to desert him when I know my friendship is of value to him. He may judge wrongly at times, but I know him to be both as clever and as good-hearted a fellow as ever lived."

Agnes shook her head unbelievingly; but, pleased at having, as she hoped, lessened his influence over her husband, and resolved upon a plan of action with her sister, she for a time forebore any allusion to what at first so bitterly grieved her—Edward's deviation from truth.

Heavy were the tears of Jessy, when told that she must leave Mosspits for a season, and her sister refused to tell her destination. Once, and once only, did Harry Hinton speak on the subject to Edward Hoskins. But Edward firmly told him in that matter he would not interfere: Jessy was his wife's sister, and consequently Agnes had the best right to determine how she was to be situated. "My wife says," he continued, "that when Jessy comes of age she may do as she pleases, but till then she will act towards her as her father would have done had he lived till now."

Hinton made no reply, and turned moodily away, muttering curses, not loud, but deep. Agnes, almost immediately after, journeyed to London, and placed Jessy under the care of a respectable female of her acquaintance who was going to Berwick. It was not without many tears that the sisters parted—tears of reproachfulness and sorrow on the one side, and of affection and anxiety on the other.

When Agnes returned, in the evening, to her cottage, she felt it very desolate; a strange girl, whom she had hired

for the purpose, was nursing her little boy. No Jessy's light step and gay smile welcomed her as in former times; and Edward was not at home—not come in—had not been home to dinner, nor to tea. She took the child in her arms, and seated herself on a little mound in the meadow that overlooked the high road: it was early in autumn, and troops of merry reapers passed from time to time, beguiling the way with song and noisy laughter; her boy sat on her knee, twisting the tough stems of the corn-flowers into what he lispingly called "posy." and ever and anon pointing, with infant wonder, at the happy groups hastening to their quiet homes. Gradually the passengers became fewer in number, the voices died away upon the hill, one by one the stars came forth in the blue heavens, and no note, save the creaking of the rail, disturbed the tranquillity that was covering the earth as with a mantle. The Mosspit cottages, nesting in their little dell, looked the very abode of cheerfulness; the lights twinkled from two or three of the small-paned windows, showing that the dames within were busy with their small housewifery. The eyes of Agnes had rested for some moments upon the scene, when her boy's gestures drew her attention towards the road. She was somewhat surprised at observing a woman, whose tattered dress and red cloak gave her the appearance of a gipsy, forcing her way through the hedge, and approaching her at an uneven but hurried pace. If she had been struck by her boldness, her attention was riveted by the expression of her wild and restless eye, which both watched and wandered. She appeared young. and, perhaps, under other circumstances, might have been called pretty; her figure was slight, and her hair, of a light auburn, fell in profuse but unarranged tresses over her face. She was without shoes, and the blood streamed from a wound in her foot, so as to attract the notice of the little boy, who pointed to it with one hand, while he wound his arm tightly round his mother's neck.

"You did wrong to trespass, young woman," said Agnes, mildly, while the stranger stood gazing upon her with a peculiar and bewildered look—"you did wrong to trespass—but you have been sufficiently punished: wrap this handkerchief round

your foot, and, if you will follow me to the cottage, I will give you a pair of old shoes to protect you."

The woman did not accept the offered handkerchief; but, still staring at Mrs. Hoskins, who had risen from her grassy seat, at last said, "Do you want your fortune told?"

"No;" replied Agnes, "and, false as the art is, you have no pretension to it—you are not even a gipsy."

"You say truly," replied the girl; "I am not a gipsy; and yet I *could* tell much that will happen to you—*you* must be the married one—where's the other?"

"If you mean my sister," replied Agnes, "she has left England."

"Left England!—left England!" repeated the young woman, jumping and clapping her hands—"gone away from"—then suddenly changing the joyful tone in which she had spoken, added —"But not of her own accord—not of her own accord—no girl would leave *him* of her own accord."

Agnes looked upon her with astonishment, and the suspicion that the poor wanderer was a maniac occurred so forcibly to her mind, that she held her child closely to her bosom, and commenced returning to the Mosspits.

"Stop, Agnes Hoskins, stop!—*you* sent *her* away, and I would bless you if I knew how—but I cannot remember the words." She paused, pressed her soiled but delicate fingers to her brow, and sighed so deeply that Mrs. Hoskins could not have said an unkind word to her for worlds.

"He will be returning soon!" exclaimed the girl, at last, in a hurried tone; "but do you look to your husband—may-be you love him; and it is very sad, as the song says—

'To love—and love for ever,'

and then to find your lover go away just like the down off the thistle—and may-be for as light a breath! Well, keep him from Harry, or the curse will overshadow you; for I was as blithe and as happy as a nightingale till I kept his company—not but what I'm gay enough still—only I don't ever feel peaceful here," (laying her hand on her heart)—"yes, Jane is gay enough still,

and does his bidding, too, as well as if he loved her; only I must not tell, because it would get Harry into trouble, that I dance round the burning ricks." She approached closely to Mrs. Hoskins while uttering the last sentence, which she pronounced slowly, and in an under-tone.

An allusion to a circumstance that had excited so much terror throughout the country, and made every one look with alarm to his own homestead, caused an involuntary shudder to pass over the frame of Agnes. The wild girl shrieked, and clapped her hands on her mouth; then, without uttering another sentence, retreated rapidly across the meadow. She had not, however, reached the spot where she entered, ere she retraced her steps with visible agitation.

"They are coming," said she, "and if he sees me here he will murder me outright; do—do, just let me hide in your house till he goes to his own, and then I can go—for it will be dark, dark night, then."

The poor creature trembled from head to foot, and, before Agnes had time to reply, had not only established herself in the cottage, but coiled herself into an inconceivably small space in a cupboard that opened into the little passage. Edward Hoskins and Harry Hinton were soon upon the green that fronted the cottage, and the flushed cheek and loud laughter of her husband told Agnes, but too plainly, he was intoxicated. Her first feeling was that of anger and disgust—her second brought the excuse, "it is not often thus with him;" though she could not but acknowledge, what every woman so circumstanced must feel, that each time she so beholds her husband must lessen her respect—and, without *that*, woman's love for man is of little worth.

"Well, Agnes—pale, pensive, as usual!" he exclaimed, as, notwithstanding his situation, she had advanced to the door to meet him: "Won't you wish Harry good-night?"

"I am always to suffer in Mrs. Hoskins's opinion, I fear, although I hurried her husband home. We saw some gipsies about, and I said they might frighten you"—he added, drawing nearly to the threshold of the door, and peering into her face

with his small grey eye, which she used to characterise as "cold," but which now appeared illumined by some secret fire—"did not you see any?"

"No;" replied Agnes, without shrinking from his gaze; "many persons passed on their way, but I did not recognise any as gipsies." Her self-possession, doubtless, disarmed the querist—for, wishing her courteously good night, he entered his cottage, and seemed determined to shut out intruders, by carefully barring doors and windows.

"So you saw poor Jessy off, my love?" exclaimed Hoskins, throwing himself on the chairs that stood near the table. "Don't, for Heaven's sake, look so calm and quiet—I know what you think—but I am sober—not quite cool, perhaps—but sober—sober as a judge. Why shouldn't I be a judge? Well, if I'm not wise enough for a judge, you are for a judgess—though you are not always right; now you were wrong about Hinton, for he'd have made a good husband for Jessy—only, as I said, she's your sister, not mine; so you've had your own way—banished your sister, and smashed that poor fellow's heart all to pieces. But the coach must have come very quickly; I did not think you could have been home these two hours. Give me the boy, Agnes, I have not had a kiss from either of you since I returned."

Agnes held the child towards him, but—whether it was that the little fellow retained a remembrance of the bleeding foot and the red cloak, or that he felt the natural antipathy of childhood to the smell of spirits, cannot be determined—he shrunk from his father and hid his face on his mother's bosom. Edward grew angry, and forcibly disengaged the boy, who screamed more loudly, "mamma—mamma!"

"Take the brat!" ejaculated the father, with an oath, at the same moment throwing him with violence to Agnes—"take the brat; but I tell you that, whatever *you* may do, my own child sha'n't thwart me; this is what comes of its having an aristocratic godmother; it already thinks my hands too rough to hold it, I suppose!"

A silly woman—nay, a woman with a moderate share of good

souse, as it is called—would have replied to this, and high words would have ensued, and seeds of bitterness therewith been sown: but Agnes was a superior woman; so, without uttering a syllable, without suffering an unkind word or gesture to escape, she took the screaming infant out of the room, gave it into the arms of the little serving-maiden, and, having wiped those eyes to which unbidden tears had started, and offered up a silent but fervent prayer to the throne of God for wisdom to form, and strength to persist in her good resolves, she returned to prepare her husband's supper with her own hands.

When Agnes had seen Edward to bed, she went to seek the poor wanderer, who had sheltered in the cupboard; but the girl was gone—how, it was difficult to conjecture, unless she had let herself down from the bed-room window, which appeared partially open. It must not be supposed that Agnes was one of those women who "humour" a husband in his faults, asserting, with a mock amiability (the sincerity of which may be always doubted) that they "have no right to oppose him in his little ways." A woman possessing a great and well cultivated mind will be anxious that her husband shall both be, and appear, perfection, and she will watch for a fitting opportunity to point out, with gentleness and humility, whatever his better judgment, if exercised, would also declare wrong. Agnes knew it was not when he was intoxicated, that she ought to say a word calculated to add fuel to the flame, but her resolution was not less decidedly taken to combat, with all her gentle strength, the growing evil.

The next morning Edward was very penitent; and for an entire week there was no recurrence of the same fault; but the evil did continue; and, with anguish which only a wife so circumstanced can feel or understand, Agnes saw that her influence and happiness were both decaying; the serpent-coil was round her husband, and each day added to its closeness and to its strength. She prayed, she wept, she entreated; and sometimes Edward himself would seem bitterly to feel his weakness and vow to amend it; but Hinton had attained that command over him which the powerful mind possesses over the weaker; and

his duty, his business, were neglected, for the society of him he termed his friend. Mrs. Cecil Wallingford called herself upon Agnes, and told her that unless Edward paid more attention to her affairs, however unwillingly, she should be obliged to procure some one else to act as steward and gardener. The suffering wife assured the lady she would do her utmost to correct his habits, of which she refrained from complaining. Mrs. Wallingford, to say the truth, felt sincere sorrow for the looks of her *protegée*, and said many kind and complimentary things to Agnes on the extreme beauty of the bud, which seemed to increase in size and loveliness in proportion to the fading of the parent flower.

Mrs. Wallingford had hardly departed when Agnes received the following letter :—

"Berwick, Nov. 23.

"My dear Friend,—It is with very sincere sorrow I inform you, that last night, without any reason that I can discover, your sister left my house; and all attempts to trace her, during the day, have been ineffectual. Lately, she manifested great uneasiness and restlessness of disposition, which I tried in vain to combat. Perhaps she has returned to you; let me hear immediately; and, praying to the Almighty to preserve you and yours in peace and happiness,

"Believe me your truly affectionate,

"T. Middleton."

Agnes sat, with the open letter in her hand, more like a thing of marble than a breathing creature: and when her husband came in she presented it to him, and covering her face with her hands, wept long and bitterly.

"Hinton knows of this, Edward," she said at last, "and must be spoken to on the subject."

"Hinton knows no more of it than you do; how could he? To my certain knowledge he has never been one day or night from home since she left, and how could he get to Berwick and back in that time, think you? Poor Jessy! it would have been

better she had married Hinton than ran off with no one knows who. Indeed, Agnes, you were wrong in sending her from us; but troubles never come alone—the last frost has got into the pinery, and Mrs. Cecil Wallingford says it's my fault; that proud lady must alter her tone, or she'll get served out like her neighbours—there are ways of bringing fine people down—Mr. Flyhill's barns and kennel were burned last night."

"What awful times!" ejaculated Agnes; "but I know you better, Edward, than to believe you would ever approve of such dreadful doings; you know your duty to your God, your country, and your neighbour; and nothing, I am sure, would ever induce you to act contrary to it. But as to Hinton, I believe he is engaged in these horrid acts—nay, Edward, you cannot deceive me; I have combated your extraordinary infatuation in his favour by every means in my power—you will not hear me, Edward; you are deaf and blind as regards that evil man; and nothing now is left for me, but to weep and pray in solitude and silence—to pray for you, my own dear and beloved husband, that God may lead you to see the error of your ways, and conduct you again into the right path!"

Edward kissed her brow, as it rested on her hands, in silence, and almost with the love of by-gone days. That religion which he had once considered her brightest ornament, he now called "the weak point of her character," and thought he was doing what was very praiseworthy in bearing with it so quietly. He immediately wrote to some friends in Scotland, about Jessy, and applied to the nearest magistrate to know what means it would be necessary to adopt to trace out the lost and unfortunate girl. Hinton protested he knew nothing of the matter—swore by all that was sacred he had never heard from her since she left the Mosspits—but failed in convincing Agnes of the truth of one word he uttered.

"You have studied the character of St. Thomas, at all events," said her husband, in a sneering tone, "and taken a lesson in unbelief."

"If I could find out what it is that Hinton believes in, and

he would swear by it, then I might believe him," replied Agnes, mildly.

Day after day, week after week, passed, and no tidings came of the lost Jessy. Much did Agnes wish that the wandering girl, whose mysterious prophecy seemed rapidly fulfilling, would again flit across her path; and often did she watch the highway, hoping, yet dreading that the tattered cloak and light form of the strange being might issue from it towards the Mosspits. Although Edward was more and more estranged from his home, he thought it necessary to apologise occasionally to Agnes for his absence: ill at ease with himself, he could not be expected to be kindly towards others; and she felt how very bitter it is to be obliged to take the cold leaden coin of civility, in lieu of the pure and glowing gold of warm affection. It is utterly impossible to describe how the alteration in a cherished and beloved object affects her who loves more fondly and fervently, after years of union, than she did when, like the most admirable of Shakspeare's heroines, she bestowed herself at the holy altar to the one being almost of her idolatry, wishing—

> "That *only* to stand high on *his* account
> *She* might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
> Exceed account."

How quickly does the ear note if the voice be not as tender as in former days! To father—mother—friends—all may seem unchanged; but the wife, who has dwelt upon every look—who knows, as it were, even the number of rays which the beloved eye throws forth—painfully sees and feels the difference. The *words*, perchance, may be as kind; but their *tone* is altered. What boots it to her if the universe views her with admiration—if the wealth of nations be piled at her feet! *He is changed!* That consciousness is the sword which, hanging by a single hair, threatens, sooner or later, her destruction, and prevents her enjoying any earthly happiness or repose. Not only Edward, however, but circumstances, were also altering at the Mosspits. The disturbed state of the country made each person suspicious of the other; and, as the winter advanced, so did distress pro-

gress. In the neighbouring districts workmen of all trades had refused to take employment without increased wages: not a night passed but cattle were destroyed, or outhouses, and in some instances dwellings, burned to the ground. Landlords knew not which of their tenants to confide in; and the misery was increased by soldiers being frequently distributed and stationed where the people absolutely lacked the means of supporting themselves. It was pretty generally rumoured that Hinton was concerned in these transactions, though no one exactly knew how. He was the principal leader of a debating-society in Mondrich, which had the misfortune to attract the attention of the magistrate, who sought to put it down perhaps by measures that might have been called violent. He succeeded; and it formed a most desirable theme for the disaffected to dwell upon. Hoskins grumbled incessantly at the "illegal" proceedings; and Agnes combated his arguments, or rather his opinions, in vain. Christmas, that trysting-time which generally brings an interchange of kindness and social feeling among all classes of society, had come; and a little episode that occurred at Mosspits will at once show the state of feeling of both husband and wife. They had been in the habit of exchanging presents, during preceding years, on Christmas-day, each anxious to surprise the other with some peculiar gift. Christmas eve, Edward did not return until the village clock had chimed eleven, and then he went sullenly to bed, without heeding the little preparations that Agnes was making for the approaching festival. She was alone; for, finding that her husband's habits prevented him from bringing home the produce of his earnings, she had wisely parted with her little servant, considering it was better to labour with her own hands than to incur debt. "And," said she, meekly, when communing with her own thoughts, "if *he will* be extravagant, the more necessity is there for my being economical."

Hoskins was awakened the next morning by the sweet kisses of his boy, while his wife, leaning over his bedside, prayed that he might enjoy many happy returns of that holy day.

"Say *we*, Agnes," interrupted Edward, "say *we*. God knows,

whatever happiness I enjoy, *you* ought to share; for I make you miserable enough at times. Will you forgive me?"

The words were spoken in the tone that Agnes so loved, and, unable to sustain her feelings, she flung herself upon her husband's bosom, and burst into tears.

When Edward, dressed in his best suit, was preparing to go to the Manor, his wife laid her hand on his arm, and, encouraged by his kindness, in the gentlest manner requested him to read one, only one, chapter to her, before he went out—it would not take him five minutes. He complied with a tolerable grace; and, when he finished. she took a small heart-shaped brooch from her bosom, and, telling him that it contained their child's hair, fastened it in his shirt.

"You did not forget, Agnes, though I did," said he; "but I will bring you something from Mondrich, where I must go after I leave the Manor; and I will be back to dinner at two, and remain with you all the evening."

Edward returned at the appointed time, but a cloud was on his brow; he hardly partook of the dinner she had prepared, and had forgotten the customary token. As the evening was closing over a cold and snowy landscape, "Agnes," he said, "I must go: I thought I could have spent all this day with you, but something has occurred which must prevent it. I will, however, return early, and do more justice to your excellent cheer at supper, than I have been able to do at dinner."

Never had his wife felt it so difficult to part from him. She requested, entreated; and for a long time his child clasped its hands round his neck, and hung by his knees even as he approached the door. His departing footsteps smote heavily on the heart of the affectionate Agnes, and, as the last echo died upon her ear, she wept.

When eight o'clock came she looked from the window; but the fog was so intense that she could see nothing save the fantastic boughs of the old oak, looking more like deepened shadows of darkness than separate or distinct objects. The song and cheerful laugh rang from two of the neighbouring cottages; and at a third there was an assembly of dancing rustics. Agnes

thought it was the first time the happiness of others had increased her misery, and she blamed herself for the selfish feeling. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve! — Christmas-day had ended, the revellers had sought their homes, and no sound was heard save the rushing of the storm amid the branches, whose outlines were now lost in midnight obscurity. It would seem that the ancient of days sturdily withstood the tempest, and groaned heavily from the exertion; the old rooks, who had made it their habitation for ages, cawed their complainings whenever the sweeping of the mighty blast passed on, as if to remonstrate with the mysterious power that disturbed their repose. She stood at the little window, and pressed her forehead against the glass, that its coolness might be imparted to her burning brow. Suddenly she thought she perceived streaks of light, or rather (so deeply coloured were they) of flame, intersecting the darkness, and gradually illuminating the distant sky. Before she had time to draw any conclusion from so singular an appearance, she started back with horror on observing, so close that she almost fancied it touched her cheek, a thin, shadowy hand, with the forefinger curved, as if beckoning her forward. Despite her self-possession, she trembled violently, and could hardly prevent herself from shrieking aloud, when she saw distinctly a white, ghastly face pressed to the glass that separated her from this untimely visitor. A sort of hissing and exulting whisper now came upon her ear. "Don't you know me, Agnes Hoskins? — don't you remember Lady Jane? Come, come with me, and see how bright the Manor is this gay Christmas night!" A horrid suspicion—too horrid to be entertained—flashed across her mind, as Agnes undid the door; and, before the half-crazed girl entered, she had sunk upon a chair, and with difficulty retained her seat. For a few moments she could not think; and the half maniac, with that feeling of sympathy which rarely deserts a woman, looked mournfully into her face. At length her eye rested on a flagon of elderberry-wine that stood upon a table with the untasted supper; she poured out a large glass of it, and, curtseying with mock solemnity to the trembling Agnes, said, before she drank it off, "Health to you, my lady, and a merry Christmas!—a cellar

full, a byre full, and plenty of faggots! See, see! they blaze—they blaze!" she continued, pointing to the sky, that was reddening higher and higher. "Come with me, and I'll tell you as we go how that will be the last fire Harry will light for many a day! He must have other darlings indeed!—but *now* he can have only me, for none of his dainty dames will follow him into strange lands—none but poor Jane! The police have him by this time, and Hoskins too; so you'd better go and bring them all home to supper!"

"Woman!" exclaimed Agnes, springing as in mortal agony from her chair, "what do you say?—Hoskins—my Edward—my husband there—at the burning of Wallingford Manor!" She seized the girl fiercely by the arm, but suddenly her grasp relaxed, and she fell stiff and cold to the earth. How long she remained there she knew not; but, when she recovered, her frame felt paralysed, the air was bitter and piercing, the light was extinguished, and all around was utterly, utterly desolate. It was some time ere she was restored to the recollection of what she had heard, and it was still longer before she recovered sufficiently to be able to move, or settle upon any plan of action. The very ticking of the clock—that gentle, domestic sound—struck heavily and painfully upon her brain; and, when it gave warning that another hour had passed into eternity, she could hardly believe the sense was correct which counted four. She endeavoured to compose her mind by supplication, and the Lord's Prayer occurred to her at once. She repeated the words, until she arrived at the sentence—"Deliver us from evil," when the full consciousness of the evil that was suspended over them prevented her finishing the holy and beautiful intercession. She arose from her knees, and groped about until she procured a light. She then endeavoured to arrange her plans. Her very soul recoiled from the dreadful idea that Hoskins had anything to do at the burning which had but a little while past streaked the sky with tokens of the wickedness of man. The heavens were still as intensely black as when first she had pressed her burning brow against the small panes of the cottage-window, and

looked earnestly and hopefully for him with whom her heart perpetually dwelt.

While she paused, and paused, she heard the sound of distant voices; footsteps approached—not her husband's. Her breath came short and thick, and, instead of passing from between her unclosed lips, seemed to encrust itself upon her tongue, and forbid the power of utterance. Men—strangers, entered; one she had seen—known—the sergeant of police. He respectfully removed his hat, "hoped that Mrs. Hoskins would forgive him for doing his duty." If her life had depended on it, she could not speak; but she looked into his face with so despairing, so imploring a gaze, that the man turned from her, with more emotion than could be expected from one who had often witnessed distress in many forms. When at last she was enabled to ask a few questions, the answers she received confirmed her worst fears. "The out-offices of Wallingford Manor had been set on fire; Hoskins, Hinton, and a pedlar of the name of Paul Dodder, had been found on the spot; and," added the man, "the Manor itself must been consumed had we not received intimation immediately after the fire was kindled—long before there was any appearance to indicate such rapid destruction."

The party then proceeded to search the cottage, but found nothing which they considered necessary to remove. "Matters may turn out better than you think for," said the man kindly. "Can I take any message to your husband?—it may comfort him, for he seemed sadly put out—stupified like."

"I will go!—no—my child—I will—I must wait till morning! Tell him—my blessing—and I will be with him to-morrow. I shall find him, I suppose, in the—" Gaol, she would have said, but could not utter the hateful word.

The man understood her, and replied "Yes,"—the mony-syllable of hope, but, in this instance, the herald of despair. They then departed, and went to Hinton's dwelling, where they remained much longer. The sergeant, with real good feeling, knocked at the door of a respectable resident at Mosspits, whom he knew was esteemed by Agnes—told her the circumstances—

and the woman needed no further intimation to hasten to one whom she both loved and respected

When she entered the cottage, Agnes was weeping bitterly over her unconscious boy, who, despite her loud sobbings, slept as calmly as if the very breath of happiness had hushed his slumbers. She extended her hand to Mrs. Lee, and said, in broken and hardly audible tones, "They will point at that innocent child, when we are both dead, and call him, in bitter mockery, the orphan of the house-burner! And who has brought this bitterness upon us? Pray for me, Mrs. Lee, pray for me!—I cannot pray for myself now! Oh, that God in his mercy had left us childless, and then I might have borne it! Wicked that I am! Will he not be, perhaps, the only thing on earth left me to love, when—when—" She pressed her hands firmly on her temples, and her friend almost feared that the violence of her grief would destroy her reason. The feelings that had long been pent up within her bosom had at last found vent both in words and tears, and before nine o'clock she had apparently regained much of her usual serenity. She dressed her child, who added unconsciously to her misery by perpetually inquiring for "papa," and placing a cup and chair for him before the untasted breakfast, she then summoned resolution to change her dress; and tying a cottage-bonnet closely over her face, proceeded with a sorrowing heart towards Mondrich.

Mrs. Lee kindly took charge of the little boy; and, to do justice to the inhabitants of the cottages, not one but saluted her kindly and respectfully as she passed.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Lee, "she has borne a great deal lately; she looks ten years older than she did this time twelvemonths."

"I am truly sorry for her," responded Miss Nancy Carter, famous for clear-starching and scandal, who had come on purpose to Mosspits to find out, as she expressed it, "the truth of everything." "I'm truly sorry for her; but she always carried her head very high, as if she were better than a servant forsooth! I'm *very* sorry for her, for all that!"

"So you ought to be, Miss Nancy, for she sent you plenty of

black-currant jelly when you had a sore throat, last winter," observed Mrs. Lee.

"Do you think poor Hoskins will get off with transportation?" persisted Nancy.

"I could never think him guilty of setting fire to Wallingford Manor, for one," replied the kind-hearted Mrs. Lee. "He was on the spot, I suppose, or they could not have taken him there; but I am certain it was to save, not to destroy."

"Well, time will tell," said the gossip, who, finding that Mrs. Lee was charitably given, thought she would seek some "kindred soul" with which to communicate:—"Time will tell;—only what did he want with seven fire-brands, tied in red tape, a cask of powder, and three mould candles? You may smile if you please, Mrs. Lee, but it's true, every word of it! Three mould candles, with the ends scorched, and a quarter of a pound of wax-ends! I had it from the very best authority, for I'd scorn to say anything without a good foundation!" and off walked Miss Nancy Carter.

It would be impossible to describe the feelings with which Agnes entered that abode of misery—a county gaol. Snow and ice had accumulated in a little court she had to cross, to such a degree, that she could hardly extricate her feet from the humid mass. As the rusty key turned in its lock, she clung to the slimy walls for support; and, when the door was thrown open, she had scarcely power to crawl into the dismal cell where her husband was confined. Hoskins sat upon a low bed, which evidently had not been discomposed, his elbows resting upon his knees, and his face buried in his hands. Agnes could not speak, but she sat down by his side, and, passing her arm round his neck, endeavoured to draw his head so as to rest it on her bosom. He shrank from the touch, and a low and bitter groan was the only reply to her caresses.

"Keep a good heart, measter," said the gaoler, "keep a good heart, and it may all go well. Bless ye! Measter Hinton doesn't get on so, but has taken something to keep life in him."

No answer was returned to this consolatory speech, and the man left them, observing that they must not remain more than two hours together.

Not many, but kind and tranquillizing, were the words which this admirable woman breathed into her husband's ear. She kissed his cold and clammy hands, and tried, though in vain, to prevail upon him to taste of the refreshments she had not forgotten to bring with her. For a length of time she obtained no word from his lips; and at last she sat silently gazing on him—as a mariner who looks upon a rock close to his native home, where he sported in infancy, and formed his plans of future greatness, but which, on his return from a long and prosperous voyage, with the harbour in view, had wrecked his vessel, and consigned his all to destruction! Silence is the nurse of sorrow: Agnes would have given worlds to have heard the sound of his voice; and, when at last he did speak, its tone was so fearfully changed—so hollow, so agonized—that she could hardly believe it to be that of her own Edward.

"I deserve this, and worse, Agnes," he said, "for I have cast the blessing of the Almighty far from me. And you, who ought to curse me, to find you thus! Do not touch me, Agnes! I could bear your reproaches; but your kindness scorches my very heart. Yet, Agnes, I solemnly call God to witness, that I am innocent of any participation in the burning at Wallingford Manor. I cannot now dwell upon it; but, as you have borne much, bear yet a little more—bear with my silence; but believe me innocent of any participation in that crime. However I may be otherwise guilty—however despicable—I repeat that I had nothing to do with the burning at Wallingford."

How sweet and how natural it is to believe in the innocence of those we love! Although Agnes well remembered the fearful habit of falsehood which her husband had contracted—although he had so often deceived her—yet she clung to the belief that he was guiltless, and blessed God for it, as though it were an established fact in the eyes of those judges before whom he was shortly to appear as a fettered culprit, whose life only might appease the offended laws of his country.

"Would to God it were come—that dreaded, dreadful day!" she murmered, in her cottage-solitude.

It was now nearly three weeks since her first interview with

her husband; a slow, consuming fever had been preying upon her strength, and utterly prevented her using the smallest exertion, or crawling to his prison. The kind neighbour, Mrs. Lee, undertook to visit him daily, and to see that his wants were cared for; the little boy was often her companion.

"Thank God!" said his poor mother, kissing his rosy cheek, "thank God he is too young to remember his father in a prison! Were he even a year older, its memory might dwell upon his mind and wither his young spirit within him."

It was early in the month of February, and still she had been unable to reach Mondrich, although nearly every day the physician described her as growing better. The clergyman's visits afforded much consolation, particularly as he told her how completely and truly penitent her husband was: this, with the assurance, repeated in every communication she received from him, of his perfect innocence, made her hope for the best, though how that innocence was to be proved remained a mystery!

Mrs. Lee had taken her boy out one day, earlier than usual, to see Mrs. Middleton; and, as Agnes looked forth on the clear cold morning, she fancied she felt stronger than she had been for a long time. The crisp hoar-frost hung in fantastic forms on the young shoots of the early budding trees. The robin hopped among the lower branches of the oak, and seeing the hand resting on the window where it had been so often fed, flew to the sill, and fearlessly pecked the crumbs she threw to her little dependent. The air, she thought, was almost fragrant; and ere the casement was closed, she had resolved to exert her strength, and walk as far as the stile that divided the Mondrich meadows. She sat for a few moments on the step; and, urged by the eager desire again to see her husband, after a little consideration, determined to reach the town. She walked better than she anticipated; and felt much pleasure at perceiving that now but one field separated her from the turn that led directly to the prison. Suddenly she became rooted to the earth; her features assumed the rigidity and colour of death; and she cast off the bonnet, which had been tied on so firmly, to catch every note of the awakening sound that passed over the town. Again!

—was it a dream?—or could it be really the trumpet—the awful trumpet that heralds the approach of him who is to sit in judgment on the crimes of his fellow-beings!

"It is come!—it is come!" she exclaimed, "the day—the very hour of his trial, and they told me not of it! Father of mercy!"—and as she spoke she sank on the ice-bound and crackling grass, and stretched forth her attenuated arms towards heaven—"Father of mercy, remember mercy for the sake of thy blessed Son! Mercy!—mercy!—mercy! Lord, this cup may not pass away; but crush me not utterly at this dreadful moment! Mercy!—mercy!—O my God!"

The trumpet-sound had ceased, and the bustle of the county-court subsided, when Agnes Hoskins—her mantle shrouding her entire figure, and its hood held closely round her face, glided, almost like a spectre, into a corner nearest the dock, where the three prisoners stood arraigned for trial. With tender care for the feelings of him she loved, she concealed herself effectually from his sight; knowing that it would increase his misery to see her there. To the indictment they all pleaded "Not guilty;" but Edward Hoskins laid his hand on his heart, and, looking firmly in the judge's face, added, in a low, impressive tone, "so help me, God!" The bearing of the unfortunate culprits was strongly contrasted: Paul Dodder's chin had sunk on his breast, and he looked down with the sullen expression of one who knew the worst was come, and cared not for it. Harry Hinton had thrown back the light and glowing curls that crowded over his brow, and his eye seemed enlarged by the bold front he carried; his features were high and regular; and the unobserving would have imagined that the firmness with which he regarded, and even analyzed, the countenances of his judges, little betokened the hardihood of guilt. Edward Hoskins stood as a sorrowful and heart-stricken man—ashamed of his offences, yet confident that he was *not* guilty of this particular crime. His suit of solemn black seemed still more dismal beside the smart blue coat and light waistcoat in which his unabashed companion was arrayed. The first person examined was the police-sergeant by whom the prisoners had been taken into

custody. The counsel for the crown, who, as usual, scented the blood afar off, lost no opportunity, in his opening speech, of stating the worst, and dwelt particularly on Hoskins's ingratitude to Mrs. Cecil Wallingford; while the counsel for the prisoners seemed equally anxious to foil his brother, and, if possible, make a way for his clients to escape.

The sergeant deposed to his finding Dodder and Hinton close to the burning barn: the latter, when first he saw him, was on his knees, in the very act of blowing the flame; the other held a quantity of combustibles (which he described), and was laying a train to communicate with the stables. Hoskins, he said, was near the spot, but made no attempt to escape. This statement went so clearly against the prisoners that the jury looked at each other, as much as to say, "What need we of further witness?" One of the police confirmed all the other had stated; and at every word they uttered Agnes felt her heart beat slowly, and still more slowly, until, at last, she scarcely breathed or lived.

"The case, my lord, against these unhappy men, seems so fully made out," said the counsel for the crown, addressing the bench, "that I need hardly trouble the court with the examination of other witnesses; unless, indeed, the jury require it."

"My lord," observed the prisoners' counsel, "I particularly wish that a girl of the name of Jane Hoole be called up: much depends upon her evidence."

"My learned brother has chosen a strange witness," replied the senior barrister; "I was anxious to spare the feelings of his clients; but, by all means, let Jane Hoole be brought forward."

All eyes were turned upon the wild fantastic girl who now ascended the witness-box. Her rich golden hair had been curled and arranged with much attention; her pallid cheeks were tinted by that fearful, but beautiful, hue which too truly indicates consumption, and her deep blue eyes were of a dazzling and wandering brightness; her dress was of faded silk, and a wide red sash girdled a figure of light and elegant proportions. She seemed much terrified, and trembled violently.

"The prisoner Hinton intimidates our witness, my lord," observed the counsel; and a shudder passed over those who saw the expression with which he regarded the unfortunate victim of his wickedness.

"Let Henry Hinton stand down," said the judge. After a little time the poor creature seemed at ease, and collected; Agnes, who had been roused by her appearance, thought she was a much more rational being than she had imagined during their former brief meetings.

"You know the prisoners at the bar?" commenced the counsel.

"I do, sir."

After a little more questioning, the rod was presented to her, and she was directed to place it on the heads of those who were present at the burning of Wallingford Manor. With a trembling hand she let it descend on the heads of Hinton and Dodder, then held it for a moment or two suspended over Hoskins, and, after some consideration, was about to return it to the officer.

"Were only these two men present?" inquired the counsel, while a thrill and murmur of mingled quality passed through the court-house.

"Though I am only a poor, half-witted creature," said the girl, looking round with an imploring air, "I want to tell the truth, which I will if you let me do it in my own way. He was there in body, but not in *spirit;* don't you see the difference? He didn't mean to be there for harm—he was there for good. But let me go on in my own way, and you'll understand me."

She then, in wandering but simple language, stated that Harry Hinton had often employed her to procure materials for various burnings, and that she did as he desired, "for the love that warmed her heart towards him." That he often promised to marry her, but that the fancy he took to Jessy had, she knew, prevented it; and so she thought, if he was once to be sent beyond the seas, she would follow him, and have him all her own. He always promised to give Jessy up; but she found that

he had got her back from Scotland, after her sister had sent her there, and resolved to punish him for his infidelity by telling the police, which she had done; and she hoped, now she had told their lordships the truth, they would send Jessy far, far away, and make Harry marry her at once; she would go with him any where—that she would—for she loved him with all her heart.

A great portion of this was unintelligible to both judge and jury; but the witness evidently interested them; and though the counsel frequently interrupted her, saying that what she stated had nothing to do with the transaction, yet they were obliged to let her go on her own way, as the only chance of getting at the truth. As to Hoskins, "he certainly was," she said, "at Wallingford, but not to burn it." It was in vain that the counsel for the crown declared that hearsay evidence should not be received;—the judge was of opinion that she ought to be permitted to go on; and the counsel for the crown resigned her to the cross-examination of the counsel for the prisoner.

"You have stated, young woman, that Edward Hoskins did not aid and abet in the burning which took place on the night of the twenty-fifth of December."

"I have, sir. I was up in the loft where they met, and when he found out what they were after, he prayed and begged them not to go on; and then my Harry made like to give it up—and Hoskins went home as we thought, for my Harry sent me down to the Manor with the chips for burning, and promised to come after; but, at the Manor, dark as it was, I saw Hoskins, who let himself in with a private key to the out-places, examining and looking about as if to see all safe. And I wondered what kept Harry away, and went back; and on the road I met Dodder, and a little behind I saw Harry—my Harry, talking to the girl I hated; and I made up my mind to tell that minute and bring the police to them; and, meeting one, I gave him a hint, and returned to the out-house, at Wallingford; and there was Hoskins and Harry quarrelling, and one reproached the other—and Edward Hoskins thought to put out the fire—and I was

sorry when Harry struck him; and then Paul Dodder went on lighting the fire that Edward tried to put out—and was like one frantic, and Harry and he struggled hard, and came so near the spot where I was crouching, that I ran off to tell Agnes Hoskins of it, and saw the police coming, and she can tell you," continued the girl, turning round to the spot where Agnes had fancied herself perfectly concealed—"there is Mrs. Hoskins. I dare say she remembers what I said."

Edward Hoskins sprang to the side of the dock, and, for a moment forgetting the propriety he had hitherto maintained, shook the bars violently, and, finding that he could not escape to her side, exclaimed, "Support, support her!—will no one look to her!—she is fainting!" But she did not faint—she approached the bar with a blanched cheek, but a step of almost supernatural firmness, and, passing her thin, cold hand through the aperture, rested her clear blue eyes upon the jury; and in a low voice, which, notwithstanding its weakness, was so earnest as to be heard in every corner of the court—

"Forgive, gentlemen," she said, "a wife's presuming to remind you that more than one life hangs upon your verdict; and"—she was interrupted by a scream, so wild and piercing that every eye was again turned to the witness-box, from whence it came.

"There—there—there she is!" exclaimed Jane Hoole. "She has followed him even here to take him from me. But you will not let her!" She leaped down the steps, and, in an instant, before the officers had time to interpose, she had torn off a cloak and hat, in which the unfortunate Jessy Grey had endeavoured to enshroud herself; but which could not deceive her lynx-eyed rival. "Here she is, my lord!—here she is! Agnes Hoskins, I will trust her to you," she continued, dragging her forward. Agnes did not see the deceiving and degraded sister; she only beheld the child of her father's old age—the girl she had loved with a mother's tenderness, and cherished with a mother's care. Turning from the dock, she opened her arms, but Jessy fell at her feet and hid her face. It was in vain that order was sought to be restored. Agnes Hoskins and her virtues were known to every individual in the court. Husbands had often pointed her out to

their wives as a model of virtue and propriety—fathers had wished for such a daughter, and young men for such a partner. And as she stood struggling with emotion, and caressing the poor lost creature, who twined around her with all the contrite feeling of a humbled sinner, the judge waited patiently till the feelings that had thus agitated every member of the assembly should subside.

"I have made one effort, Agnes, to repair my many crimes," whispered Jessy to her sister: "I have no evidence to offer in favour of *him;* but I believe I can confirm the statement just made by that unhappy girl, as to your Edward's innocence." This information was conveyed to the counsel for the prisoners; and, as the poor changed creature was about to ascend the box, Agnes threw her own cloak over her shoulders, to conceal a form that called a crimson blush to her faded cheek. Her quiet and distinct account of the transaction fully corroborated what the wild girl had sworn to. Unknown to her deceiver, she had witnessed the quarrel which took place between them on that awful night; and had wandered over the country ever since, "seeking rest, but finding none"—not daring to pollute her sister's cottage with her presence, and resolved not to visit the author of her misery, lest he might alter the fixed purpose of her soul - that of appearing at her brother-in-law's trial to testify his innocence. She was supported down the steps, and clung to her sister's shoulder during the jury's deliberation. Without leaving the box, they returned a verdict of guilty against Hinton and Dodder, and acquitted Edward Hoskins. Agnes might well be excused for forgetting Jessy's feelings in the overwhelming gratitude she experienced for the preservation of her husband's life. So completely were her ears closed by a new sensation of joyfulness and hope, which overflowed as it were all her senses, that she hardly understood, when the judge had absolutely pronounced sentence of death on his wretched companions, the meaning of his words. One of Jane Hoole's frightful shrieks aroused her from those visions of returning happiness which flitted around her.

"Death!—not death—not death for Harry!" vociferated the maddened creature: "it is transportation—not death!—you won't kill him!" At the same instant Agnes felt the grasp, that

her sister had so firmly fixed on her arm, relax; she looked upon her—her hands were stretched towards the dock; and, as her gaze rested upon Hinton's face, which was turned towards her, those beautiful eyes grew yet more dim; her livid lips parted over her white and glistening teeth; and, with a frightful convulsion, the ardent, misguided spirit of Jessy Grey passed from its earthly dwelling!

Months and years have gone by—the Mosspits are quiet and beautiful as ever—but the curate of the parish, a mild and benevolent young man, dwells in the cottage that had once been gladdened by the presence of the excellent Agnes. She had passed with her small household to another land, where we will for a moment follow; it is even in the new world; and there, in a well-built dwelling, on the borders of a green savannah, is the final resting-place of Edward Hoskins and his now numerous family.

The sun is setting behind the dense and magnificent woods that seem to mount even to the heavens; and its parting rays linger, as if loath to part from the richly-cultivated corn and meadow-land that surrounds his house. There, literally, under the shadow of their own vine and fig-tree,—"none making them afraid,"—are this once more happy family assembled.

"And will you never return to England father?" demanded the first-born, as he carefully examined the contents of a huge chest which had just arrived from Europe; and which contained a variety of tools and articles for use

His mother replied, "Could we be happier there than we are here?"

Her husband thanked her with a look that told of gratitude unspeakable; and when the group had separated, and only Edward and his cherished wife remained to enjoy the deep tranquillity of the balmy twilight, he disturbed the meditation, which the question had occasioned, by the utterance of a natural, but painful idea. "If our children should ever go to England,

Agnes, they would hear a sad story of their father; but they would hear also of their mother's virtue: had you been unkind —had you even been what the world calls just to yourself; and what you might have been without offence,—I should have been a banned and a blighted man, but you did—"

"Only what every woman who truly loves her husband would do," interrupted the unchanging Agnes. "And, behold, the Lord has been not only merciful, but bountiful;—the treasures bestowed upon us on earth" (she pointed to their children, who were assembling for evening worship within the porch) "can only be exceeded by those appointed for humble believers in heaven."

THE OLD MAID.

THE lady who accompanied the children I had so often admired, was a slight, thin, narrow-looking person, of what is termed "a certain age;" such certain age being of all ages the most decidedly uncertain. When an unmarried female passes thirty, until she is incontrovertibly old, she remains, in the estimation of all well-bred persons, "of a certain age;" and has to undergo the varied taunts, sneers, and suspicions, which are unhesitatingly lavished upon the sisterhood:—"As particular as an old maid,"—"as fidgety as an old maid,"—"as cranky as an old maid,"—"disagreeable old maid,"—and "ugly old maid,"—are only a few of

church, or even the vulgar music of marrow-bones and cleavers. [By the way, I cannot avoid saying, that I agree with Grant Thorburn in considering an old bachelor really an obnoxious animal. Where he has the means of supporting a wife, he ought to have one; besides, the awful power of "popping the question" is in his own hands. And he may rely upon one thing, that be he ever so old, and ever so ugly, ever so openly devoted to celibacy, man-traps and spring-guns are in his path; and if he does not beware, like all who are very, *very* hard to please, he may take the crooked stick at last. So much by way of advice *en parenthese.*]

At last "Milly" came, and I confess I did not at first find her very prepossessing. Her figure was small and narrow, her shoulders were round, or, perhaps from constitutional delicacy, she stooped rather forward; her mouth had a firm-set expression, by no means pleasing; her nose was small and well formed; and her eyes were deep grey, and lustrous—yet was their brightness tempered, as it were, by a certain indefinable discretion; they seldom looked abroad, but seemed retired within themselves, quietly musing upon the affairs of life, rather than wandering amid, or partaking of, its excitement; her brow, though somewhat low, was full, and shadowed by a profusion of light hair, which in her youth must have been rich and luxuriant; but Time had *there* commenced a war with beauty; or, perchance, it might have been sorrow or sickness. that scattered snows with what had been a superabundance of curling auburn tresses; her throat was beautifully white, though its roundness was gone, but a black velvet band, clasped by a rich ruby brooch (the only ornament she wore), set it off to the best advantage; her entire dress, bearing, and manners, savoured much of what is called puritanism. She would accompany the children to the beach, and, while they wandered about, draw forth her knitting, and, with her eyes fixed on the wide ocean or the passing clouds, continue her mechanical employment without heeding the passers by, or, so unobtrusive was her appearance, being heeded by them. Or she would read. either in a small thick volume, having the appearance of a Bible, or in divers other

books, in both ancient and modern bindings. She was evidently particular in her dress; her shoes and gloves (her feet and hands, I observed, were delicately formed) were always of superior make and quality, and there was a precision about her dress which led to the belief that she was exact in all things. She did not seem anxious to make my acquaintance, and a nervous tremour in her manner, when conversing with strangers, showed she was either naturally timid, or unused to general society. She blushed, moreover, in addressing you, though, after the awkwardness attending a first salutation had ceased, there was a strange mingling of gentleness and firmness in her conversation. That she was an educated, rather than accomplished, woman, was evident; but, though devoted to my three young friends, she did not wish to explain the cause of her affection towards them: not that she affected mystery, but any allusion to their being related to her, or of her kin in any degree, created that species of annoyance which the curious care too little to inflict. Once only, in one of the casual, and somewhat cold, conversations we held together, she observed, that there were ties stronger than those cemented by relationship; with this I perfectly agreed, but added, that it was rather an odd observation for a Scottish woman, whose clan-like sympathies generally give a tinge to all things. She smiled,—one of those dim, faint smiles which separated her firm-set lips, with an expression of pensive sweetness that accorded well with the gentle meaning of her soft intelligent eyes,—and observed, to the very clan-like feeling, which my observation appeared to condemn, they owed both their prosperity and success: "In strange countries, when far away from home," she continued, "the feelings confined to the Mac Gregors, Mac Phersons, and Mac Donalds, extend to each child of the hill and heather; the Scotsman is everywhere the Scotsman's friend; and, in my humble opinion, this very circumstance, so often urged against us, is much in our favour: if such were the course adopted towards the children of every country, when away from their natural dwellings, there would be a less number dependent on the charity of strangers."

I agreed most readily with this assertion, and embraced the

opportunity of paying a just tribute to the moral and intellectual worth of those who dwell over the border. She appeared gratified.

I have generally noted that the Scotch are never warm, at first, either in their expressions of pleasure or anger: they are early acquainted with the benefits arising from restraint; they learn it in their mother's arms, herself ever patient and exemplary; they are taught it by their deacons and their pastors; and a knowledge of the world establishes them in the judicious practice of self-control. I never — however meritorious the restraint undoubtedly is—knew a person to be very popular, who was very particular on this point. Perhaps we like to be acquainted with those who now and then make little slips in conduct, and occasionally burst forth into certain extravagances, both of management and temper, because they seem so many palpable excuses for our own misdeeds.

"Horace tells me you are going to leave Bognor, and intend passing a month at Hastings," said Miss Millicent to me one morning; "you will take a letter for me to a friend of ours there, a Presbyterian clergyman, who has lately fixed his residence in that neighbourhood?"

Of course I promised to do so.

"Perhaps," she continued, "you would like his acquaintance: he is a kind, amiable man, not much in your way; but I am sure you would esteem him highly, if you knew him."

I did not exactly know what Miss Millicent meant by his "not being exactly in my way," nor did I ask: I suppose she considered me too scatter-brained for a grave acquaintance. I should not have liked to have been told *that*, and I did not wish to put the maiden lady into a situation where it might have been necessary to have said a civil bit of fib.—My readers must forgive me;—but my busy mind, ever employed on those delectable buildings denominated *Chateaux en Espagne*, had settled it, that this Mr. Campbell was some antiquated beau of hers, and that one of these days Millicent Morrison might become Millicent Campbell. Still that would not do; my imagination, stretched to its greatest length, could not fancy her a married woman.

What would she be without her little peculiarities? and a marrying woman ought to have none; the very pins confining the folds of her shawl on either shoulder, said, as plainly as pins could say, "We were placed here by maiden fingers." Then the white satin bow, at the back of the neat Dunstable straw bonnet, its ends cut exactly into three sharp points, and the two loops of such equal length, that you might fancy the threads were counted; that white satin bow would have stood on end at the idea of the fair hand which arranged its proportions being devoted to any male creature's control; no, that could not be a correct conclusion. Why, then, did she blush, when delivering me the letter for "Mr. Campbell?" and why did Horace look cunning, and whisper his sister; and why did the little lady blush, and simper, and look grave at her brother, when he repeated the whisper, as well as to say—"For shame, Horace?"

I wish big and little people would never either whisper or discourse silent eloquence with their eyes, in company; it is really very rude, very—and very perplexing; for it is so natural to put that and that together,—and draw conclusions,—and worry one's brain, about what, after all, is no concern of one's own. Now, as if I had not enough of my own affairs to mind, I continued perplexing myself about the three children and Millicent Morrison—whom I *had* seen,—and about this Mister Jamie Campbell—whom I had *not* seen; and was never fairly content or comfortable, until I had the pleasure of receiving Mr. Campbell, *chez nous*, at St. Leonard's. I love the national accents of all countries,—some more, some less,—they always tell me of something that is not present, and set the mind wandering to other lands; bring to you the sweet south, the sturdy north, the brave and the beautiful of distant countries; the bold or the tranquil landscape is outstretched before you, and often to me comes the memory of much that I shall never see again, when a poor basket-woman in Covent Garden market accosts me in what many a one would call a detestable brogue, with—"God save you this fine morning, my lady; does your honour want a basket? and any how, whether you do or not, God's fresh blessing be about you!"

Mr. Campbell had not lost the accent of his country, nor had he tried to lose it; he appeared a quiet, gentlemanly man, though not altogether what the *élite* would have termed a gentleman; there was a fire in his deep blue eye, quelled, but not extinguished, which I fancied proved him a man of genius. Like most of his countrymen, he possessed considerable literary information, and a great love for music; but one thing I set my head at rest about at once—he would never do for Millicent Morrison:—he was slovenly in his dress, and his shoes, I observed, were tied with black leather twist instead of riband; this would, as I said, never do for her. But why, then, did she blush? We shall see.

The following Sunday confirmed my opinion, that Mr. Campbell was a man of genius, and that his talents, far from being hid under a bushel, were brightly burning, kindled by a holy and well-directed zeal for the benefit of his congregation. There was something wild and picturesque in the situation of his little chapel, which called to mind the persecuting days, when the disciples of the true Faith had not where to lay their heads: it was nested almost in a cleft of the hill-side; and from the little, clean, and well-preserved platform, which fronted the entrance, you over-looked the wooded valley—the distant town—and the boundless ocean, stretching wide and away; the sunbeams dancing with its waves, and the blue arch of heaven, untainted, on that bright morning, by a single cloud, reflected in its bosom. I remember the text he worked upon so beautifully—it was a simple but a joyous one to the believing Christian; it involved no abstruse doctrinal points; it was one of those excellent and heaven-constructed sentences which lead the mind from earth to heaven by a single image—

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

He described fully and forcibly the bitter burthen of sin, giving due weight to its temptations and its fascinations in the first instance, but proving how, in the end, it became wearisome to the lightest spirit—how it fretted, and festered, and galled, and oppressed, all who imagined that the pleasures of this life

could satisfy that craving after happiness and immortality so inseparable from our nature. After descanting upon the first portion of the sentence, with rare and fervid eloquence he turned to the promise so touchingly given by our Saviour—"I will give you rest:"—he painted "the rest" signified by the Son of God in colours so holy, that, as for a moment my eyes wandered through the open window upon the outstretched landscape, I felt as if his moral pencil had been dipped in the tranquillity of nature, and drank with thankfulness of the river of living waters which his eloquence poured upon a soul thirsting for a knowledge of the love of God. Then came the hymn, and it was impossible to look up to the gorgeous sky, or out upon the bounteous earth, without feeling conviction of the truth that

"HIS ways are just, HIS counsels wise."

I forgot the slovenly habits, and ceased to think that the shoes were fastened with leather twist; I even, on my return to St. Leonard's, indulged in the hope that Millicent Morrison might yet become Millicent Campbell. There is no saying how long this reverie might have continued, had not Mr. Campbell himself, accompanied by a—*wife*—and three children, overtaken my lagging footsteps. "Mrs Campbell wished to be introduced to you; she only returned yesterday from a visit to her father's, in Argyleshire, or she would have called before." Alas! alas! was poor castle-builder ever so confounded! I made the best of it, however, and agreed to take a friendly cup of tea with "the Campbells" the next evening. I will at once pass over the frugal but kind hospitality of my hosts, and only mention, that very soon I heard a story I have never forgotten—a story I have prized and cherished—a tale of forbearance and good faith—converting an old maid into a heroine, exalting my sex as I best love to see them exalted, more by their virtues than their knowledge. The story was of MILLY OF THE MANSE.

"She was a winsome bonny lass, when I first knew her," said Mr. Campbell, "blithe—and before all women I ever met for singing Allan Ramsay's ballads, or the songs of Robbie Burns; she was her father's darling, her mother's pride, and indeed, I may say, the pride of all the congregation; for her father was

the pastor of Kirk-Haverling, and lived at Haverling Manse. She certainly," continued Mr. Campbell, after pausing for a moment, " was the bonniest and blithest lass I had ever met."

" That may be," observed the minister's wife, " but, Jamie, I never could think Miss Milly as handsome as you say."

" Oh!" replied Mr. Campbell,—I thought, quite as slily as was consistent in a minister,—" she was the bonniest and blithest lass I had ever met *then;* it was before I saw you, Nannie." The respectable " Nannie" smiled a smile that well became her round and ample countenance; and her husband proceeded. " Ronald M'Lean was the only son of the M'Lean, a laird of family and power, but of little wealth; for what remained from ancient times had been spent in keeping up a style and appearance to please the whim of Ronald's mother, an English lady, certainly of great beauty. The laird loved her with Scottish truth, and more than Scottish fervour, and cared not what he did so she was pleased. Young Ronald had too much of the spirit of his clan to be a great favourite with his English parent, who wished him to be sent to an English school. But this his father stoutly refused; and the boy was accordingly placed under the care of Duncan Morrison of Haverling, who had a rich reputation as a classic, and a still richer as a moral man I was at that time a pupil in the same house, though under very different circumstances from Ronald M'Lean. He was a laird's son, and I was the only child of the Widow Campbell of Mavisglen—he came to school with a fine footman behind him, I came by myself—he had a horse to carry his luggage, and my store was contained in a handkerchief."

" In a trunk—a small trunk," interrupted Mrs. Campbell.

" No, Nannie, it was my poor mother's best silk handkerchief."

" If it wasn't a hair trunk, it was a box, with may be a handkerchief lapped round it," persisted the worthy woman, anxious for her husband's dignity on all points.

" No, it was only a handkerchief; do I not remember my mother—?"

" Go on," interrupted Mrs. Campbell.

"I will," said the minister; "but the handkerchief"—("It was a trunk, I know," murmured Mrs. Campbell, but in so low a tone as to be heard only by me, who sat next her)—"did not prevent my being treated by all the house, Milly included, as well as if I had been a laird in prospective; they were happy days, both for me and Ronald, but especially for Ronald, who secured the love of a heart that was above all price. Millicent and the young laird grew together, and studied together, and in all studies where patience and application was necessary, Milly outdid us all: she was the personification of contented industry and innocent enjoyment; the admired of the rich, the beloved of the poor. It was seen by all at the Manse, except Milly's father and mother, that Ronald M'Lean loved her with a strong and fervid affection, such as men, however they may change in other matters, can feel but once—and Milly was not slow in loving in return. I very much doubt if Millicent would have given up her heart so entirely to this affection, had not the lady of M'Lean, much struck with her beauty and acquirements, invited her to spend a few months at M'Lean Castle, an invitation she was proud to accept; and while there the lady treated her with so much kindness, and, as Milly afterwards said, 'so like a mother,' that she felt assured, poor thing! that the proud lady knew and encouraged her attachment towards her son: it was natural enough for her to think so—and indeed Ronald believed the same—natural enough, too, in him – though bitter was the struggle, and hard the trial, which taught them the contrary.

"One morning, during her stay with the M'Leans, Milly was sent for to Mrs. M'Lean's dressing-room earlier than usual: and there were the laird and his proud lady, stiff and cold enough; and, instead of kissing her 'sweet Scotch girl,' as she used on other occasions, she permitted her to stand, while she haughtily inquired, how she had dared to suffer her son to breathe his affection towards her, while under *her* roof? she, moreover, upbraided her as an artful, designing creature; and concluded by an injunction that she should quit her house for ever, and see her son no more. You may suppose that Milly waited not to

be twice bidden: her knowledge of propriety prevented that, nor, indeed, so bitterly hurt was she, had she the thought or wish to bid good-bye to him she loved so dearly. 'The blessing of the Lord would not be with me,' she murmured in the silence of her own heart, 'if I encouraged him in disobedience; and I will show the great lady of M'Lean that I can be as proud as she is.'"

"It was a sinful thought," quoth Mrs. Campbell.

"So it was. Nannie, I'll allow," replied her gentle husband; "but there are times when the wounded spirit stirs within the best of us, and we cannot, without much prayer, command it to be still."

"That's true, Jamie," quoth she again; "you are aye on the side of mercy."

I was pleased to see, that though she might be a trifle jealous of Millicent Morrison, she honoured her husband's opinion; and I also observed that her eyes glistened whenever he uttered a sentiment of a good or pious tendency.

"She went home without leaving word or token for poor Ronald, who came to the Manse the next day in a woful taking. By this time her heart had become softened, and she argued moreover with herself, that she might meet him once more, just to bid him good-bye for ever; and seeing him from her window pacing up and down the little flower-garden he had so often assisted her to cultivate, she just slipped on her hood, and stood before him.

"The young man, at first, neither sighed nor spoke, but he looked into her face as he would read her soul, which was then an easy thing, for her mind was as an open book, full of good thoughts and maidenly wisdom, devoid of guile, and simple withal as a mountain dove. I am no way skilled in love passages—they are foolish, and only snares for wisdom, beguiling men and women of their good resolutions; and so it was in this case; for Milly, who, notwithstanding Mrs. M'Lean's harshness, had formed the resolution of giving up all communion with Ronald, was persuaded, and without her parents' sanction, to meet him once more in a deep glen, where they had often

wandered before it was considered a sin for either to love what to each appeared most lovely upon earth. I cannot altogether acquit Mrs. Morrison of blame in this transaction:—true, the young people had never spoken to her of the affection subsisting between them, but I am sure she knew it, and she ought to have foreseen that. being so much together, with similar pursuits, and a suitable difference of age, nothing was more natural than that they should become attached, in defiance of prudential considerations. The master himself, poor man, knew nought of such matters; he possessed book-learning enough to stock a university, but he was aye careless of the things of this life, and no ways economical in the management of his homestead."

"I never blamed the Dominie for that," said Mrs. Campbell, "for it is the woman's business; but what I censured the mother for, was the belief she got into her head, that Milly's beauty and Milly's cleverness made her a fit match for e'er a laird in Scotland. Mothers work ill for their daughters instead of good, by such whimsies."

"So they do, Nannie; and yet I mind your turning up your nose at Mrs. Grace, the curate's wife, when she hinted that her William and our Maggy might be married yet."

Mrs. Campbell laughed, saying only in reply, "But Willy is such a foxy, mischievous ape, and every one says Maggy is so handsome."

"She is very like you, my love," replied the minister, and continued:—

"Milly was at her tryst by the time appointed. She sat on the same bank where she had often sat before with her lover. She looked at the sky; the evening was closing in—the stars, one by one, were stealing up the blue arch of heaven—the dewy softness of night was over the landscape; still he came not—the loved, the looked-for, was not there; her heart beat more quickly—she scanned the hill, the wooded glen—still he came not; there was a perfect stillness in the air and on the earth, and no sound disturbed the serenity of nature, save the occasional bark of the shepherd's dog coming over the mountain, or the plash of the water-fowl in the deep blue lake at her feet. It was a

delicious hour, yet she heeded it not; her heart was sair—and at last the unbidden tears rolled down her cheeks as if that heart would break. Suddenly came the sound of a footstep; she dashed the memorials of sorrow away, and the feel of 'Why does he not come? peradventure some evil hath befallen him,' was succeeded by the resolution of assuming an angry manner, though displeasure was far from her heart. In another moment —not Ronald—but the M'Lean himself stood at her side. Now was she indeed alarmed; and grasping the arm of the tall chieftain, demanded, with an earnestness which told her feelings, where Ronald was.

"He seated the trembling girl on the bank, and took his place beside her. M'Lean was a stern, but not a cold-hearted man, and he felt, more than he cared to express at home, for the innocent and artless creature who loved his son with such devotion; he thought highly of her, for thinking highly of that which belonged to him; and it was some time before he was able to make the communication he knew must be made. Ronald M'Lean had fallen from his horse that morning, and been much injured. He had confided to a favourite servant his desire that Milly should be made acquainted with his misfortune, as an excuse for breaking his appointment. The servant, with the dread of his mistress before his eyes, told her of it; and thus it was that the father, and not the son, kept the expected tryst. 'And now, Millicent, I am come to speak to, to commune with you, not to reproach or chide you for a circumstance which we ought all to have foreseen, and over which, poor girl, as yet, you have had no control. It will not be always thus; for you have reason, and I am about to call upon you to exercise it, not for your own, but for Ronald's benefit.

"'Anything for his benefit,' she replied, 'I will gladly do.'

"'Do you know, Milly, that you have it in your power to establish the house of the M'Lean in all its former grandeur, or to plunge it into deeper difficulties than it has yet known?'

"'I am sure, laird,'—interrupted Milly, eagerly.

"'Make no rash promises—nothing rash will I listen to,' said the M'Lean,—'hear me—hear me calmly: Ronald loves you—loves you now fondly, truly—but young men change—marriage, blessed and holy though it be, cannot always restrain the wandering thoughts of man—and even if you were bound together in the holy bonds of matrimony, Ronald might—nay, I am sure he would, change.' Millicent seemed as though she had not heard aright, and then shook her head. 'All men change,' repeated the laird.

"'You were aye accounted a good husband,' observed Milly.

"'I trust I have been so,' he replied.

"'Then, laird, you have no' changed,' added the minister's daughter; 'and why suppose Ronald unlike his father?'

"M'Lean looked at her for a moment, baffled by her simplicity and good sense. 'But,' said he, 'it was not that I meant to speak of;—have you never heard of Lady Lucy Graham, the heiress of thousands of acres, and thousands to stock them, too?'

"'The auld maid of Graham Hall?' inquired Milly, quite unsuspiciously.

"'She is not to say auld—not forty, I should think—nor near. Well, she loves my son, and would give up her houses, her kye, her lands, her money, for the love you hold.'

"'I dare say she would,' replied Millicent proudly, 'and well she might;—houses, kye, and lands,—oh! what are they to the love of Ronald M'Lean?' and then, ashamed that she had gone so far, she hid her blushing cheeks between her hands.

"The laird took her hand kindly within his. Intent as he was on other matters, there was something in Milly's love—young, innocent, and beautiful as she was—something in her love for his son so true and blameless, that he was proud of the very beauty of the flower whose bloom he was about to destroy. 'You know, Milly, that Ronald is not rich.'

"'I do know it, laird;—but he is rich enough in the graces and blessings of a great mind—God has been bountiful to the M'Leans.'

" 'Granted; but you heard what his mother said.'

" 'I have no' forgotten it, sir,' replied the maiden, 'and think not so meanly of me as to suppose that, because I kept, or meant to keep tryst with him to-night, it was to be more to him than I have ever been—far, far from it—I would but have bid him farewell,—and tauld him not to think of me—though—though—' she burst into tears, and her head sunk upon her bosom.

" 'I have told you we are not rich, Millicent; I must now tell you more—we are poor.'

" 'A weel! a weel!—' she said, the accent of her native land becoming stronger as her feelings were more wrought upon; 'it is na disgrace.'

" 'The girl is no fool,' thought the laird; 'and yet I would rather have a fool, or, better still, a woman of the world, to manage, than this right-minded creature; I should know how to deal with the one and the other, but she baffles me.' 'But it *is* a disgrace, young woman—a disgrace for a lord, or even a private gentleman, to want the means of keeping up his rank. How would you like to see me—or Ronald—in a gaol?' Millicent clasped her hands, and twisted her fingers together, while he continued—'And yet this must happen—this must be, unless you give him positively up, and refuse of yourself to see or commune with him.'

" She raised her eyes, trembling in the moonlight, to the laird's countenance,—it was still and pale.

" 'I intended to tell him *that*, to-night.'

" 'And to abide by it?'

" 'Yes; I never say one thing and mean another. I meant, laird, to abide by it—unless'—she paused; and then added, 'unless it made him as miserable as I—feared—I thought it would.'

" The laird saw it would never do to go on at this rate, that nothing could be gained by it, and therefore resolved to try his hand at his lady's plan: he repeated his assurance that such were his embarrassments that a very little time would witness his ruin, unless some decided steps were taken to prevent

it; he told her that Ronald could possess the hand of Lady Lucy Graham, if he chose to take it; and that nothing would then be wanting to make them flourish. Again Millicent's eyes scanned the laird's countenance, but the expression was changed. —'And so,' she said, 'you would sell your son to save yourself?' M'Lean grew angry—he reproached her with presumption—he repeated the insinuations his wife had more coarsely used; but Millicent's spirit would not brook such treatment. She rose as he rose; and the man of the world saw that more could be accomplished by touching her feelings than by rousing her pride. His manner again became gentle; he descanted on the high name brought low—on the great trampled in the dust—on the misery that would rest upon her, if she saw a husband, such as Ronald, steeped to the very lips in poverty, with the consciousness that it was *she* who had done this. He assured her that his mother's curse would rest upon him to the last hour, if their destinies were ever united; and he, therefore, implored her to think of the desolation she would entail upon them all, by persisting in her acquaintance with his son—by continuing a contract out of which only misery could arise.

"'Marry Lady Lucy Graham! marry Lady Lucy Graham!' she repeated time after time—'And you, laird, think he would marry Lady Lucy Graham?'

"'I know he would; he told me himself that if it were not for his promise to you, he would marry her at once.'

"'He said that?' she added; and again suspiciously perused his countenance. 'And ye think that, before his life was ended, he would be happier with her than with me?'

"'God witness for me, I do!' said the laird. 'How, think ye, could a M'Lean abide poverty and the disgrace of a prison to any of his kith or kin?'

"With the rapidity of thought Milly's mind glanced back to Ronald's habits, Ronald's tastes, Ronald's opinions; and the review confirmed his father's statement: his habits were expensive, his tastes refined, his opinions extravagant. She had often thought so—but then he was a laird, and a M'Lean; and she looked upon their rude magnificence as an heritage. After

a pause,—and during that pause much that was great, much that was truly noble, rallied in her soul,—she drew forth from her bosom a small pocket-book, and tearing out a leaf, wrote a few sentences upon it; then rising from the sward whereon she had knelt to write, she stood before the laird with that right noble dignity of manner which those only possess whose bodies are the temples of living and active virtue.

"'Laird of M'Lean, you come of a noble race; and though it may be but a vain and silly thing, yet I have been taught to believe, that as the richest soil yields the best fruits, so the best blood gives forth the most glorious actions. For myself I was born in a cottage, I have lived in a cottage, and, God willing, may die in one. We who are so born, and so to die, cannot be expected to understand much that you have said; but you have called God to witness to your belief, that before your son's life was ended, he would be happier with Lady Lucy Graham than with me; *that* God heard—and now sees us both: if such be really your belief, give him this paper—and—then—I shall see his face no more.—If—if—you know of anything to change your opinion, oh! do not, do not for the sake of the gold that glitters, sell the happiness of such as Ronald M'Lean! And now, laird, God be wi' you! and from my heart I pray that you may no' hae cause to mourn for keeping this tryst with Milly of the Manse.'

"About a week after this Milly went to visit an aunt who was far away in Edinburgh; and before she came back to her father's manse, the country and the bells had rung with tales and joy—for that the houses of M'Lean and Graham were now one. Before her return home, her mother had died suddenly. Here was a divided grief; and though I thought I understood it all, I could not for my life tell what change had come over Millicent Morrison. She was more useful in the house; as studious in the library; she conversed as freely; but there was certainly a change—little odds and ends of bitternesses—not ill-temper either, but positive bitterness, would mingle with, or rather, like a wasp's sting, end, her conversations. She was rather watchful than abstracted, and more keen than I had known her—not

worldly-minded, and yet looking after trifles; fonder, than I thought quite beseemed a woman, of diving into people's motives; not so fond of birds or flowers as she used to be, for those are the affections of a simple and unseared heart. She was not much thinner, nor much paler, but her features had acquired the acuteness of her mind; in short, I cannot tell how it was—but Milly *was* changed."

"That was about the time I'm thinking you fell in love with her yerself," said Mrs. Campbell, taking advantage of the minister's pause, and saying so between the sobered mirthfulness of jest, and the seriousness of a remembered displeasure. The good lady's husband blushed, positively blushed, (how odd, and queer, and awkward is a man's blush!) and rubbed his forehead, as if to obliterate the sense of his timidity; and both his wife and myself were malicious enough to enjoy his confusion!

"I will not deny that—I—I—in short, she refused—better, and greater than I—for, notwitstanding the change, Milly of the Manse was the desired of many hearts. And now to the dole of the story:—God forgive old M'Lean and his bitter lady! for how they could ever think that such as Ronald could be happy with Lady Lucy, is what I could never understand; nor could I quite make out how they got him to give up Milly. Disappointed and heart-broken, the poor fellow rushed into all sorts of extravagance; he seemed to care for nothing, to stick at nothing. And at last all the country cried, Shame upon him! — all, all but *one*—there was *one* who never joined the cry that was raised against him - *one* who never believed that he was so very wicked, though he had been tempted to commit grievous sin; she hoped and trusted still.

"Ten years had not passed from the time of the auld laird's keeping the tryst of the young, when Castle M'Lean was advertised to be sold by public roup, and Lady Lucy had burst a blood-vessel in a fit of passion, on learning the utter destruction of all her property. Where was Ronald M'Lean? Ronald M'Lean had gone to India. And where was the auld laird, whose family pride had wrought such desolation?—even in the cauld and noisome cell of the gaol he had dreaded. It was night, and

the gaol gate was opened to a neat and well-dressed female, who had passed the day within the prison walls—the minister of peace and consolation to the old white-headed man, who had wrecked the happiness of that fair and excellent girl, and with it foundered the hopes and aspirations of his first-born and only son. Poor Millicent! not a week passed without her spending one, and often two days, with M'Lean. And it was a calm and holy sight, to see that woman, still lovely and still young, sitting at his feet reading him passages from Holy Writ, and paying him that homage in which his heart delighted, till the last—which soon arrived, for his spirit was bowed and broken.

"When it was known that M'Lean was dead, all the old chiefs seemed to think it was a point of duty, more, in my mind, connected with their own station than the old gentleman's merits, to give him a grand funeral, though he might have nearly starved in prison but for the exertions of Milly of the Manse. However, the pall and the pibroch were not wanting, and scores of bare-legged gillies came down from the highlands: and Milly stood at one of the windows in the market-place to see it all pass; and though the tear of womanly feeling was in her eye, there was an expression of such scorn and contempt upon her lip, that I cared not to look on it a second time.

"After a lapse of about six years, word came that Ronald M'Lean had married—married again in India! and all I heard Millicent say, was, 'So best.' But when she made tea for us—(I was staying for a few days, at the time, with her father)—when she made tea for us in the evening, I perceived that her eyes were red, and that she put three times the usual quantity of tea into the teapot, which was uncommon for her, who was so frugal.

"Now comes the wonder of the story:—a brother of the minister, one whom he had not seen since his boyhood, died in Mexico, and all the accumulated hoards of years came to Millicent Morrison, in right of her father; he, poor body, was nearly childish from age. Here was a change—a wonderful change for Milly, not only in that it made her independent, and even rich, but that it showed forth her character in its true and perfect

light. Poverty had been accounted to her a crime—it had stood between her and her earthly happiness—it had formed a barrier, as it always does, between what might be almost termed the living and the dead: the knowledge that she was poor had made her proud, and cold, and stern; and fearful that her advances would be repulsed because of her poverty, she made none. Nor would she receive the overtures of strangers kindly, for she thought, 'When they find me poor, I shall be insulted:' this, as she now confesses, was a sinful pride; but the wealth which puffs up so many, made her gentle and humble as a shorn lamb. It is only a noble mind that can support prosperity; every one tries to bear up against adversity, but prosperity is the touchstone of true greatness.

"The quiet calm smile came back to Millicent's rigid lip; gentleness again reigned over all her actions. She was not bitter in word as she had been; and as her sphere of doing good increased, she appeared cheerful—almost happy; yet did I never hear her sing. And, I have marked, a deepened blush would suffuse her cheek, whenever the M'Lean was alluded to, which certainly was not often the case,—for the unfortunate are soon forgotten.

"I had been married some time; the poor auld minister, full of years, had been gathered to his fathers, and a neat white marble slab, raised by the hand of his affectionate daughter, marked out the place of his final rest, in the kirk of Haverling. Milly had settled fairly down into an old maid, and indulged in many of the whimsies which are overlooked in a married woman, but are put down as tokens of the sisterhood when a lady arrives at a certain age. (Oh! oh! thought I.) She had a grey cat, lively, though not mischievous. She was fond of knitting and patchwork, and wofully particular in the shape and fashioning of the bit ribands to trim her caps and bonnets; but she was actively benevolent—beloved by the poor—respected by the rich. It might have been, as nearly as I remember, about seven years after the news that Ronald M'Lean was again married in India, that Millicent Morrison came to my house,—for I was the oldest friend of the family in existence,—and after some difficulty,

and many sorrowing looks, produced a letter, which she permitted me to transcribe." The minister took it out of his desk.

"When you receive this, Millicent, the hand that pens it will be colder than the clay of this burning country, and the Ronald whom you once, and I would fain hope, always loved, will then be no more. I have heard of you, Milly—heard of your good fortune—and I believe in your faithfulness. My life has been a turbulent dream, beginning in ambition, ending in disappointment. One thing hangs heavily at my heart—my old father—he died in a gaol, which would have been utterly desolate but for you. Milly, how great was your revenge!—may God bless you—may God reward you—I cannot. My wife will be the bearer of this to England; she is of another country—she knows nothing of European habits, and in Scotland the M'Lean has now no friends; perhaps I deserve it—but *she* does not. There are reasons why she cannot remain here, which you will hear her explain, that is—but—I do hope you may meet. She is a guileless, simple Indian girl, only a girl—not yet twenty, though the mother of three children; feel for her—pity her—for she loved me, 'not wisely, but too well.' You bore our separation like a heroine—she will, I know, only bear it like a woman—and hers will be the same as ours, for an earthly eternity. God bless you, Milly! Love Annabel for my sake—no, not for mine, for you ought not to love me, but for her own sweet sake—and farewell—farewell for ever—EVER!—R. M'L."

"'And they are come to England,' I said. 'They are,' she replied; and it was the first time I ever saw her weep: now the tears rolled rapidly and heavily down her cheeks. 'They are come, but he is gone; and though people say that insensibility comes with age,—and I am not young,—God knows how gladly I would have died to save the life of Ronald M'Lean—died to save him for his wife and helpless children; they are at Portsmouth.'

"'And you—?'

"'I am going there directly. I have hired a carriage for the purpose; for it is no' fit that Ronald M'Lean's wife and bairns should tramp the country in a public coach, as if they had nae

bluid in their veins. If they want worldly gear, they must share all I have; and whether they do or no, they shall not need a friend.' 'You shall not go alone, Miss Milly,' I replied; 'I too will welcome M'Lean's widow; and I know Mrs. Campbell will be proud to go with us.' It was Millicent's first visit to England; and we did all we could to rouse her attention to the scenery, and the difference so palpably existing between Scotland and this cultivated land: but her mind was far away—and at last we agreed it was the wisest plan to leave her to herself. My Nancy enjoyed the journey much; for it was far pleasanter going that way, than being jolted inside a public coach."

"That's like your bundle story," interrupted Mrs. Campbell, turning up her really pretty little nose, "that's like your bundle story—as if I was never in a private carriage till then;—I've been in the Duchess of Buccleugh's carriage, before now." And she looked at him as one should say, "I wish you would not be so blunt before strangers."

"I remember it," replied the minister quietly; "it was when Mistress Laurie Grant, her companion, your own first-cousin, broke her leg, and you went with her to the doctor's."

"Never mind—how should you ken. Surely it was her Grace's carriage, at all events," replied the worthy woman.

"We found the widow of Ronald M'Lean a poor delicate Indian creature, who could do little for herself, and less for others—hardly able to rise off the sofa—with hands that could not work, and feet that could not walk—with a pale brown cheek, and black soft gazelle eyes that seemed fainting for the sun, whose rays they had fed upon in her own bright land: her manners were languid and lady-like, and there was a tone of tender and deep feeling in her low musical voice that rendered her desolate situation ten times more interesting—desolate it indeed was. What her reasons for seeking a refuge in Scotland were, were known only to Millicent and herself; but she made no secret of her straitened circumstances; and her helplessness was the most pitiable I ever witnessed. Added to the languid bearing so characteristic of every Indian, she was languid also from ill-health, and her pallid

cheek, occasionally flushed by a deep crimson spot, betokened a disease which I shuddered but to think upon. She would sit for hours and days caressing her children, or gazing upon a miniature—*his* likeness—which she always wore round her neck. As soon as she was able to travel, Millicent bore her and hers to her own home; and the widow of the proud house of M'Lean was indebted to the despised Milly of the Manse for food and shelter. My fears as to the dangerous nature of the disease which was preying upon her, from her first arrival in England, were confirmed; the hot-house plant could not bear removal to a colder clime—and she drooped, and drooped—and for two years Milly tended her sick bed, until it became the bed of death. It was not one of her least trials that the temper of an Indian, ever hard to bear, was unequal to support with firmness the struggles of departing nature. Millicent was obliged to listen to her complainings, and to endure, as well as she could, the weak petulance of the mother, and the tiresome, tormenting noise (was ever old maid so situated!) of three romping, spoilt children. Yet she not only bore them, but was cheerful under all these trials; and God greatly blessed her exertions: for, though that Indian lady's soul was in a state of pitiable darkness when she came to England, before she died she had sought and found the Saviour—and sought and found Him through the instrumentality of the humble Milly. I had remained with M'Lean's wife on one particular evening—and we had enjoyed much profitable conversation during the time. It was a painful, and yet a pleasing thing for me to witness the struggles the poor lady underwent, trying to conquer her constitutional weakness and irritability of temper—the spirit warring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. If betrayed into error, she so quickly perceived her fault, and strove so earnestly to remove the predilection to evil, that it was impossible not to love the frail and fragile being who was so quickly hastening to join, as she hoped, her Ronald in another world. As I wished her good night, I thought she appeared more feeble than usual, and her eyes gleamed from out her pale thin countenance with an unearthly brightness. 'This trial will soon pass away now,' I said

to Milly, as she followed me to the door. 'The poor children!' sighed Millicent. 'Ay, indeed, the poor children,' I repeated, 'what will become of them!' 'I have no kin,' she replied; 'and even if I had, I think that love is stronger than blood: I will be to them as much a mother as I can—and, by the protection of the Lord, and your advice, I trust they will not disgrace their name.' 'But, my dear Miss Milly, you are not aware of the fresh trials you are bringing on yourself. Norman Cunningham, the late laird's fourth cousin, has offered to take the boy.'

"'And breed him up to fish and shoot—without heeding God's counsel, or caring for man's—then turn him off into a regiment, to be shot at like a popinjay! No, no—I'll do my best with the three. You know, I am only an old maid,' she continued, faintly smiling, 'and used to trials; and, like all things else, they are nothing when you grow accustomed to them. God's will be done! this care will save the fag end of my life from being spent either selfishly or uselessly; and, may be, the young creatures, when they grow up, will have an affection for her who cared for them all so well;—it takes the desolate feel from about one's heart, to have something to live for and love.' This was a long speech for Milly; and I went home through the starlight, pondering upon the dispensations of the Almighty, and thinking to myself, how hard it is for us to pass right judgment upon each other. No one, to see that stiff, formal, particular old maiden, would conjecture that so warm, so generous, so tender a heart dwelt within her bosom—that the love she imbibed in early youth kindled, in its own fitting shrine, a pure and steady flame, which burned as brightly as if it had been fed with smiles—not fanned by sighs. I thought—what was there could extinguish woman's love!—a passion scoffed at by those who cannot comprehend its height, its depth, its strength, its duration: sorrow quenches it not—steep it in tears, they but renovate its lustre; press it with thorns, the blood that trickles from the wounds is as incense on the altar; talk of death, it laughs at the danger and disease, as if they were but

—'baseless fabrics of a vision.'"

The minister again paused; his wife rubbed her eyes more than once, and then, with the dew still moist upon their lids, seized her husband's hand, and kissing it with genuine emotion, forgetful of a stranger's presence, she exclaimed, "Ah, Jamie Campbell, I wish *I* had been ye'r first love, and then may be you'd have spoken of me as you have spoken of her!" He pressed his wife to his bosom; and, looking in her face, tenderly replied,—

"I spoke of the love of all women, not of one only. I believe you would do as much for me as Milly did for Ronald M'Lean. Thank God, it is not needed!"

"I was right," thought I to myself. "After all, I *was* right—there was an *affaire de cœur* here; and *that* made Milly blush."

"But the lady, sir?" said I.

"Oh, yes!—I had forgotten her: she fell into a soft sleep, from which she awoke in about an hour, and in a low voice called Milly, who came instantly to her side.

"'My children!' said the young Indian mother. In a few moments they were in the room: she kissed them—blessed them all; then, taking a small jewel-casket that was under her pillow, she fastened round the neck of her eldest girl poor Ronald's miniature. She then selected a rich clasp of rubies, and placing it in Milly's hand, added, '*His* hair and mine are within this.—Tell me—tell me,' she continued, rallying her strength for the question, 'do you think *he* is in heaven?'

"'Through the Redeemer's mercy, I believe it,' replied Milly, deeply affected.

"'And—I—I—meet him there?' She clasped her hands for a brief space—tried again to speak, but the power was gone; she motioned the children to go near Millicent, who kissed them all, and pressed them in her arms; a light and heavenly smile passed over the lady's beautiful lips—they parted—she moved her hands once, and only once, convulsively—and all was over.

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"You know the rest, having, of course, discovered that the children you so much admired are those of Millicent Morrison's adoption. She has discarded the grey cat, and, I believe, only

suffers one pet, a water spaniel, to share her attentions with her wards."

"I am astonished," said I, "that Ronald M'Lean did not say more about his son: one would have thought he would have been pleased and proud to transmit his name, a name so old, to posterity."

"I rather think he had learned the emptiness of seeking to keep up appearances without suitable means."

"Poor Milly!"

"GREAT MILLY!" exclaimed the minister, "how delighted I should be to see all maids, wives, and widows as useful as MILLY OF THE MANSE."

THE USES OF ADVERSITY.

PART THE FIRST.

"SARAH!" exclaimed old Jacob Bond, as he sat up in his bed, while the wind clattered and whistled through the shivering window-frames. "Hush! Is that Brindle's bark?"

"No, father; it is one of the farm dogs near the village. Lie down, dearest father; it is a cold night, and you are trembling."

"I don't know why I should feel cold, Sarah," he replied, pointing his shadowy fingers towards the grate, where an abundant fire blazed; "I am sure you have put down as much wood as would roast an ox."

"It is so very cold, father."

"Still, we must not be wasteful, Sarah," he answered; "'wilful waste makes woful want.'" Sarah Bond covered the old man carefully over, while he laid himself stiffly down upon his pallet, muttering his favourite proverb over and over again. She then drew the curtains more closely, and seated herself in front of the fire.

The room had been the drawing-room of the old house in which Mr. Bond and his daughter resided; but for the sake of sparing both labour and expense, he had had his bed removed into it; and though anything but comfortable, a solitary, impoverished, and yet gorgeous appearance pervaded the whole, such as those who delineate interiors, loving small lights and deep shadows, would covet to convey to canvas. The bed upon which the old man lay was canopied, and of heavy crimson damask. In the dim light of that spacious room, it looked to the worn-out eyes of Sarah Bond more like a hearse than a bed. Near it was an old spinnet, upon which stood a labelled phial, a teacup, and a spoon. When Sarah seated herself at the table, she placed her elbows upon it, and pressed her folded hands across her eyes; her chest heaved convulsively; and when she removed her hands, she drew a Bible towards her, trimmed the lamp, and began to read.

The voice of an old French clock echoed painfully through the chamber. Sarah longed to stop it, and yet it was a companion in her watchings. Once, a shy, suspicious, bright-eyed mouse rattled among the cinders, and ran into the wainscot, and then came out again, and stared at Sarah Bond, who, accustomed to such visits, did not raise her eyes to inquire into the cause of the rustling which, in a few more moments, took place upon a tray containing the remnants of some bread and cheese, her frugal supper.

"Sarah," croaked Mr. Bond, "what noise is that?"

"Only the mice, father, as usual. Do, father, try to sleep; I watch carefully—there is nothing to fear."

"Ay, ay, men and mice are all the same—nothing but waste. When I am gone, Sarah, keep what you will have; it won't be

much, Sarah, my poor girl,—it won't be much—just enough to need care; but KEEP IT—don't lend it, or give it, or spend it; you are fond of spending, my poor girl: see that huge fire, enough for three nights—early bad habits. When we lived in a small house, and were poor, it was then you learned to be extravagant: I had no money then, so did not know its value."

"But we were happier then, father," said Sarah Bond; "we were so cheerful and happy then, and so many poor people blessed my dear mother, and Mary"——

"Hiss—ss!" uttered the dying miser; "don't dare mention your sister, who disgraced me by marrying a pauper—a pauper who threatened my life, because I would not give him my money to save him from starving; but he *did not* get the old father-in-law's gold: no; he *starved, and*"——

The words thus uttered by her father, who she knew had not many hours to live—uttered, too, with such demoniac bitterness —forced the gentle, patient woman to start from her seat, and pass rapidly across the room to the side of his bed, where she sunk upon her knees, and seized his shrunken hands in hers. "Father!" she exclaimed, "I have been your child for forty years, and you have said, that during that period, by no act of my own have I *ever* angered you. Is it not so?"

The old man withdrew one hand gently, turned himself round, and looked in her face: "Forty years!—is it forty years?" he repeated; "but the fair brow is wrinkled, and the abundant hair grown thin and grey. You were a pretty baby, Sarah, and a merry child; a cheerful girl, too, until that foolish fancy. Well, dear, I'll say no more about it: good, dutiful girl; you gave it up to please your father, full twenty years ago; and when he dies, you shall have *all* his gold—there's a good father! You must *keep* it, Sarah, and not give it, or lend it. I know you won't marry, as *he* is dead; nor see your sister—mind that: if you see *her*, or serve her, the bitterest curse that ever rose from a father's grave will compass you in on every side!"

"My father!" she said, "oh, in mercy to yourself revoke these words! She knew nothing of her husband's conduct; he

used her even worse than he used you. Oh, for my sake, say you will forgive Mary! It is all I ask. Do what you please with your wealth, but forgive my sister."

"You were always a fool, Sarah," he replied, faintly and peevishly. "If I could do as I please, I would take my property with me; for you will surely spend it. But there is another condition—another promise you must give me. Now, don't interrupt me again; we will talk of *her* by and by, perhaps. As long as you live, Sarah, *as you value my blessing*, you must not part with anything in this room. You will live on in the old house, or perhaps sell it, and have a smaller; yet don't spend money in new furnishing—don't; but never part with anything in *this room*—never so much as a stick."

This promise was willingly given; for, independently of her love for her father, Sarah Bond had become attached to the inanimate objects which had so long been before her. Again she endeavoured to lead her father away from that avarice which had corrupted his soul, and driven happiness and peace from their dwelling. She urged the duty of forgiveness, and pleaded hard for her sister; but, though the hours wore away, she made no impression upon him. Utterly unmindful of her words, he did not either interrupt her or fall into his former violence. On the contrary, he seemed involved in some intricate calculation—counting on his fingers, or casting up lines of imaginary figures upon the coverlet.

Sarah, heart-broken, and silently weeping, retreated to the table, and again, after turning the fire, betook her to her solace—the precious volume that never fails to afford consolation to the afflicted. She read a few passages, and then, though she looked upon the book, her mind wandered. She recalled the happy days of her childhood, before her father, by the extraordinary and most unexpected bequest of a distant relative, became possessed of property—to what extent she could form no idea. She knew that this relative had quarrelled with the heir-at-law, and left all to one he had never seen. This bequest had closed up her father's heart; instead of being a blessing, so perfectly avaricious had he grown, that it was a curse. Previously, he

had been an industrious farmer, and, though a thrifty one, had evinced none of the bitterness of avarice, none of its hardness or tyranny. He could then sleep at nights, permit his wife and children to share their frugal stores with those who needed, troll "Here, around the huge oak," while his wife accompanied him on the spinnet, and encourage his daughters to wed men in what was their then sphere of life, rather than those who might consider the gentle blood they inherited, and their superior education, a sufficient set off to their limited means and humble station. Suddenly, riches poured in upon him: his eldest daughter, true to the faith she plighted, would marry her humble lover, and her father's subsequent harshness to her favourite child broke the mother's heart. Sarah not only had less firmness of character than her sister, but loved her father more devotedly, and gave up the affection of her young heart to please him. His narrow nature could not understand the sacrifice; and when her cheek faded, and her really beautiful face contracted into the painful expression of that pining melancholy which has neither words nor tears, to lull his sympathy, he muttered to himself, "Good girl, *she* shall have *all* I have."

No human passion grows with so steady, so imperceptible, yet so rampant a growth as avarice. It takes as many shapes as Proteus, and may be called, above all others, the vice of middle life, that soddens into the gangrene of old age, gaining strength by vanquishing all virtues and generous emotions; it is a creeping, sly, keen, persevering, insidious sin, assuming various forms to cheat even itself—for it shames to name itself unto itself; a cowardly, darkness-loving sin, never daring to look fair human nature in the face; full of lean excuses for self-imposed privation; only revelling in the impurity and duskiness of its own shut-up heart. At last the joy-bells ring its funeral knell, while it crawls into eternity like a vile reptile, leaving a slimy track upon the world.

The inmates of the mansion, enclosed in its old court-yard, had long ceased to attract the observation of their neighbours. Sometimes Sarah called at the butcher's, but she exchanged

smiles or greetings with few; and the baker rang the rusty bell twice a-week, which was answered by their only servant. When Mr. Bond first took possession of the manor-house, he hired five domestics, and everybody said they could not do with so few; and there were two men to look after the gardens: but after his daughter's elopement, and his wife's death, three were discharged, and he let the lands and gardens; and then another went, and Sarah felt the loneliness so great, that she made the remaining one sleep in her own room. The house had been frequently attacked: once, in a fit of despair, her brother-in-law had forced his way in the night to the old man's side, and but for her prompt interference, murder would have been done. No wonder, then, that her shattered nerves trembled, as she watched the shortening candle and heard the raving of the wind, saw the spectral shadows—the broken plumes that ornamented the canopy of the bed—cast upon the fantastic walls, *felt* that *his* hour was at hand, and feared "that he would die, and make no sign;" still, while those waving phantasies, passing to and fro through her active but weakened mind, made her tremble in every limb, and ooze at every pore, and though unable to read on steadily, her eyes continued fixed upon the book which her hand grasped, with the same feeling that made those of old cling to the altar of their God for sanctuary. Suddenly her father called—and she started as from a dream—"Sarah!"

She hastened to his side—"Dear father, what do you want?"

"Child, the room is dark; and you had so much light just now. All is dark. Where are you? But it was better, after all, to put out the light; 'wilful waste makes——'"

Before the miser had concluded his proverb, the light of *his* existence was extinguished for ever!

Several weeks elapsed before Sarah Bond recovered sufficiently from the shock—ay, and genuine grief—occasioned by her father's death, so as to investigate her affairs; the hardness and the tyranny she had borne for so many years had become habitual, and her own will was absolutely paralysed by inaction. Jacob Bond had always treated his daughter as if she were

a baby, and it was some time before she could collect herself sufficiently to arrange her future plans. She had no friends; and the sister to whom, despite her father's cruel words, her heart clung so fondly, was far from her, she knew not where. The mourning for herself and her servant was ordered from a neighbouring shop, with a carelessness as to expense, which made people say that Sarah was of habits different from her father.

The rector and curate of the parish both called, but she shrunk from strangers. The very first act, however, of her liberty was to take a pew at church—a whole pew to herself—which she ordered to be curtained all round. Some said this indicated pride, some said ostentation; but it was simply shyness. And, soon afterwards, she placed in the aisle a white marble tablet, "To the memory of Jacob Bond, who died in the seventy-eighth year of his age, deeply lamented by his sorrowing daughter."

Some ladies connected with a society for clothing the poor called upon her, and explained their object; she poked five old guineas into the hands of the spokeswoman, but forbade the insertion of her donation in the visitor's book. During the following week she had numerous applications from various charitable bodies, to whom she gave generously, they said, while she reproached herself with narrowness; to all, however, she positively refused to become a yearly subscriber; and when closely urged by the rector to be one of the patrons of his school, she answered, "Sir, my father received his property suddenly, and I may be as suddenly deprived of it. I will give, but I will not promise."

She added one more servant to her establishment; and as she did not send out cards returning thanks for the "inquiries," which increased daily, Sarah Bond was a very lonely woman; for though some, from curiosity, others from want of occupation, others, again, from the unfortunately universal desire to form acquaintance with the rich, would have been glad, now the solitary old miser was gone, to make fellowship with his gentle-looking and wealthy daughter, yet her reserve and quietness

prevented the fulfilment of their wishes. Weeks and months rolled on; the old house had been repaired and beautified. Mr. Cramp, Sarah's law agent and "man of business," advised her to let the house, of which she occupied about as much as a wren could fill of the nest of an eagle; and, strangely enough, finding that the humble house of her childhood was to let, she took it, removing thither all the furniture which her father had made her promise never to part with. The ceiling of the best bedroom was obliged to be raised to admit the lofty bed with its plumes, and the spinnet was assigned a very comfortable corner in a parlour, where the faded stately chairs and gorgeous furniture formed a curious contrast to the bright neatly papered walls and drugget-covered floor; for in all matters connected with her own personal expenses, Sarah Bond was exceedingly frugal.

After her removal, though shy and strange as ever, still she *looked* kind things to her rich, and *did* kind things to her poor, neighbours; only in a strange unusual way; and her charity was given by fits and starts—not continuously. She moved silently about her garden, and evinced much care for her plants and flowers. Closely economical from long habit, rather than inclination, her domestic arrangements were strangely at variance with what could not be called public gifts, because she used every effort in her power to conceal her munificence. She did not, it is true, think and calculate how the greatest good could be accomplished. She knew but one path to charity, and that was paved with gold. She did not know how to offer sympathy, or to enhance a gift by the manner of giving. Her father had sacrificed everything to multiply and keep his wealth; all earthly happiness had been given up for it; and unsatisfying as it had been to her own heart, it had satisfied his. Inclination prompted to give, habit to withhold; and certainly Sarah Bond felt far more enjoyment in obeying inclination than in following habit; though sometimes what she believed a duty triumphed over inclination.

If Sarah Bond ministered to her sister's necessities, she did it secretly, hardly venturing to confess she did so, but shielding

herself from her father's curse, by sending to her sister's child, and not her sister. Receiving few letters, the village postman grumbled far more at having to walk out to Greenfield, than if he was accustomed to the journey every day; and one morning in particular, when he was obliged to do so while the rain poured, he exhibited a letter, sealed with a huge black seal, to the parish-clerk, saying, he wished with all his heart Miss Bond had remained at the old manor-house up street, instead of changing; and where was the good of taking her a mourning letter such a gloomy day? it would be very unkind, and he would keep it "till the rain stopped;" and so he did, until the next morning; then taking back word to the village postmaster that Miss Bond wanted a post-chaise and four horses instantly, which intelligence set not only the inn, but the village in commotion. She who had never wanted a post-chaise before, to want four horses to it now, was really wonderful.

"Which road shall I take, Miss?" inquired the post-boy, turning round in his saddle, and touching his cap.

"On straight," was the answer. Such a thrill of disappointment as ran through the little crowd, who stood at the door to witness her departure. "On straight!" Why, they must wait the post-boy's return before they could possibly know which way she had gone. Such provoking suspense was enough to make the entire village demented.

Miss Bond remained away a month, and then returned, bringing with her her niece, a girl of about eight years old—her deceased sister's only child, Mabel Graham.

The following Sunday, Sarah Bond went to church, leading her young companion by the hand; both were in deep mourning, and yet the very least observant of the congregation remarked, that they had never seen Miss Bond look so happy as when, coming out, after service, and finding that the wind had changed to the north-east, she took off her scarf in the church porch, and put it round the neck of the lovely girl, who strongly remonstrated against the act. It was evident that Mabel had been accustomed to have her own way; for when she found her aunt was resolved her throat should be protected, she turned

round, and in a moment tore the silk into halves. "Now, dear aunt, neither of our throats will suffer," she exclaimed; while Sarah Bond did not know whether she ought to combat her wilfulness or applaud such tender care of herself. It was soon talked of throughout the village, how wonderfully Sarah Bond was changed; how cheerful and even gay she had become. Instead of avoiding society, how willingly, yet how awkwardly, she entered into it; how eagerly she sought to learn and to make herself acquainted with every source and system of education. No traveller in the arid desert ever thirsted more for water than did she for knowledge, and her desire seemed to increase with what it fed on. The more she had, the more she required; and all was for the sake of imparting what she learned to Mabel. She fancied that teachers might not be kind to this new-found idol; that she could transfer information more gently and continuously; that the relative was the best instructress; in short, the pent-up tenderness of her nature, the restrained torrent of affections that had so long lain dormant, were poured forth upon the little heiress, as she was already called; and captious and determined she was, as ever heiress could be; but withal of so loving a nature, and so guileless a heart, so confiding, so generous and so playful, and so overflowing with mirth and mischief, that it would have been impossible to fancy any living creature, who had felt the sunshine of fourteen summers, more charming or more tormenting.

"I wish, dear aunt," exclaimed Mabel one morning, as she sat at her embroidery, the sun shining through the open window upon the abundant glories of her hair, while her aunt sat, as she always did, opposite to her, that she might, when she raised her eyes from off the Italian lesson she was conning for her especial edification, have the happiness of seeing her without an effort; "I wish, dear aunt, you would send that old spinnet out of the room; it looks so odd by the side of my beautiful piano."

"My dear Mabel," replied her aunt, "I have put as much *new* furniture as you wished into this room, but I cannot part with the old"——

"Rubbish," added Mabel, snapping her worsted with the impatience of the movement.

"It may be rubbish in *your* eyes, Mabel, but I have told you before that my dear father desired I should never part with the furniture of the room he died in."

Mabel *looked* the truth—"that she was not more inclined towards the old furniture on that account;" but she did not say so. "Have you got the key of the old spinnet, aunt? I should like to hear its tone."

"I have never found the key, my dear, though I have often looked for it; I suppose my father lost it. I have danced to its music before now to my mother's playing; but I am sure it has not a tone left."

"I wish you would dance now, dear aunt," exclaimed Mabel, jumping up at the idea; "you never told me you could dance; I never, somehow, fancied you could dance, and I have been obliged to practise my quadrilles with two high-backed chairs and my embroidery frame. Do, dear aunt; put by that book, and dance." It would be impossible to fancy a greater contrast than aunt and niece. Sarah Bond's erect and perfectly flat figure was surmounted by a long head and face, round which an abundance of grey hair was folded; for by no other term can I describe its peculiar dress; her cap plain, but white as snow; and a black silk gown, that had seen its best days, was pinned and *primmed* on, so as to sit as close as possible to a figure which would have been greatly improved by heavy and abundant drapery. Mabel, lithe and restless, buoyant and energetic, unable even to wish for more luxury or more happiness than she possessed, so that her active mind was *forced* to employ its longings on trifles, as it really had nothing else to desire; her face was round as those faces are which become oval in time; and her bright laughing eyes sparkled like sunbeams at the bare notion of making "aunt Sarah" take either the place of a high-backed chair or the embroidery frame in a quadrille. "Do dance," she repeated.

"My dear child, I know as little of your quadrilles as you do of my country dances and reels. No, Mabel; I can neither open

the spinnet nor dance quadrillee: so you have been twice refused this morning—a novelty, is it not, dear Mabel?"

"But why do you not break open the spinnet? Do break it open, aunt; I want to see the inside of it so much."

"No, Mabel; the lock is a peculiar one, and could not be broken without defacing the marqueterie on the cover, which I should not like to do. My poor mother was so proud of that cover, and used to dust and polish it with her own hands."

"What! herself!" exclaimed the pretty Mabel; "why did not her servants do it?"

"Because, my dear, she had but one."

"But one! I remember when my poor mamma had none," sighed Mabel, "and we were *so* miserable."

"But not from lack of attendants, I think," answered Sarah Bond. "If they *are* comforts, they are careful ones, and sadly wasteful. We were never so happy as we were then. Your mother and I used to set the milk, and mind the poultry, and make the butter, and cultivate the flower-garden, and help to do the house-work; and then in the evening we would run in the meadows, and come home laden with wild flowers; and, tired as we were by alternate work and play, my dear mother would play on that old instrument, and my poor father sing, and we sisters wound up the evening by a merry dance, your mother and myself trying hard which could keep up the dance longest."

Mabel resumed her embroidery without speaking: Sarah Bond laid down the book she had been reading, and moved restlessly about; her manner, when either thoughtful or excited, prevented her features from being disturbed; so her feelings were soothed by wandering from place to place, or table to table; but after a considerable pause, she said—"I wish you were a little older, Mabel; I wish you to be older, that I might convince you, dear, it is vain to expect happiness from the possession of wealth, unless we circulate it, share it with others, and yet do so prudently and watchfully. Yet my poor dear father would be very angry, if he heard me say that, Mabel."

"Yes, I know," interrupted the thoughtless girl; "*for he was a miser.*"

"Hush, Mabel!" exclaimed her aunt. "How can you say anything so harsh of him from whom we inherit all we have? He was careful, peculiar—very peculiar; but he saved all for me; and may God judge mercifully between him and me, if I cannot in all things do as he would have had me." And then she paused, as if reasoning and arguing with herself, apologising for the human throes in her own bosom that led her to act so frequently in direct opposition to her father's desires; so that to those who could not understand her motives and feelings, she appeared every day more inconsistent. "It is difficult to judge of motives in any case. I am sure, if he had only gone abroad into the world, and seen distress as I have seen it, he could not have shut his heart against his fellow-creatures: but his feelings were hardened against some, whom he considered types of all; and, seeing no misery, at last believed, as many do, whom the world never dreams of calling as you called him, Mabel—seeing no misery, believed that it only existed in the popular whine. I am sure, if he had seen, he would have relieved it. I always think *that* when I am giving: it is a great blessing to be able to give; and I would give more, were I not fearful that it might injure you."

"Injure me, dear aunt!—how?"

"Why, Mabel, my heart is greatly fixed upon seeing you a rich heiress, and, in time, suitably established."

"You have just been saying how much happier you were when you were all poor together, and yet you want to make me rich."

"People may be very happy in poverty before they have known riches; but having once been rich, it would, I think, be absurd to suppose we could ever be happy again in poverty."

"I saw," replied the girl, "two children pass the gate this morning, while I was gathering flowers—bunches of the simple white jessamine you love so much, dear aunt—and they asked so hard for bread, that I sent them a shilling——"

"Too much," interrupted Sarah Bond, habitually rather than

from feeling—"too much, dear Mabel, to give to common beggars."

"There were two, you know, and they looked wan and hungry. About three hours after, I was cantering my pony down Swanbrook Lane—the grass there is so soft and green, that you cannot hear his feet, while I can hear every grasshopper that chirps—suddenly I heard a child's voice singing a tune full of mirth, and I went softly, softly on; and there, under a tree, sat one of my morning acquaintances, making believe to sing through a stick, while the other danced with bare feet, and her very rags fluttered in time to the tune. I never saw more joy in well-fed, well-clothed children, for they paused and laughed, and then began again. Poverty was no pain to *them*, at all events."

"True, dear; *but a shilling was a great deal to give at the gate*," observed her aunt, adding, after a pause, "and yet it shows how little will make the poor happy. I am sure, if my father had looked abroad, instead of staying at home to watch his—his—money, he would have thought it right to share what he had. It is an unnatural thing to shut one's self up from the duties of life; one gets no interest for any other outlay to do the heart service: but though these poor children danced their rags in the sunshine, and felt not the stones they danced on, yet my dear Mabel could not dance with poverty as her companion—my blessed, blessed child!"

"I'd rather dance a jig with mirth than a minuet with melancholy," laughed the girl; "and yet it would take a great deal to make me miserable, if I were with you, and you loved me, dear aunt. Still, I own I like to be rich, so as to have everything I want, and give everybody what they want; and, aunt Sarah, you know very well I cannot finish this rose without the pale floss-silk, and my maid forgot both that and to order the seed-pearl."

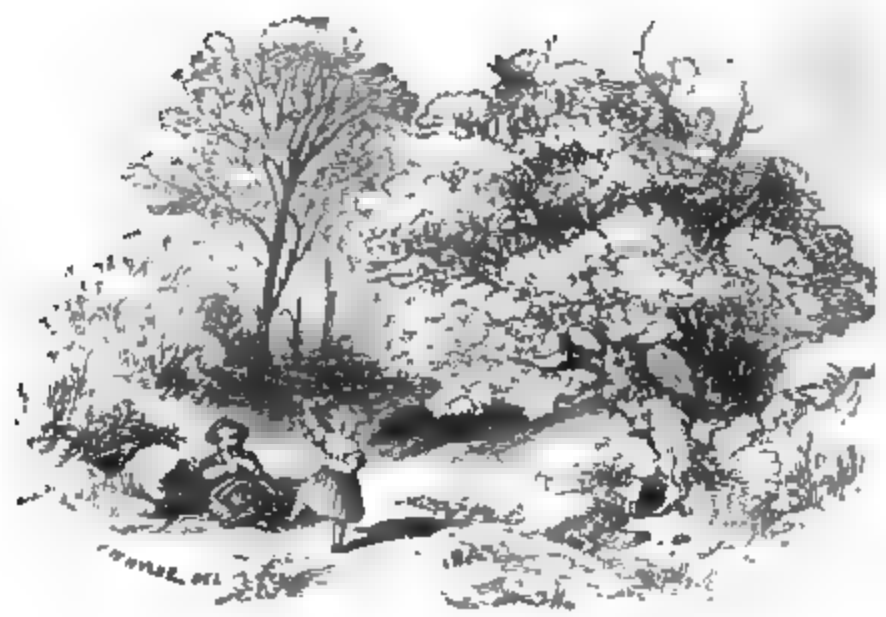
Mabel's complaint was interrupted by the servant, who told Miss Bond that Mr. Cramp, her attorney, wished to see her.

"Show him in," said Miss Bond.

"He wishes to see you alone, ma'am."

"His wife is going to die, and he will want you to marry him!" exclaimed Mabel, heedless of the servant's presence. "Do, dear aunt, and let me be bride's-maid."

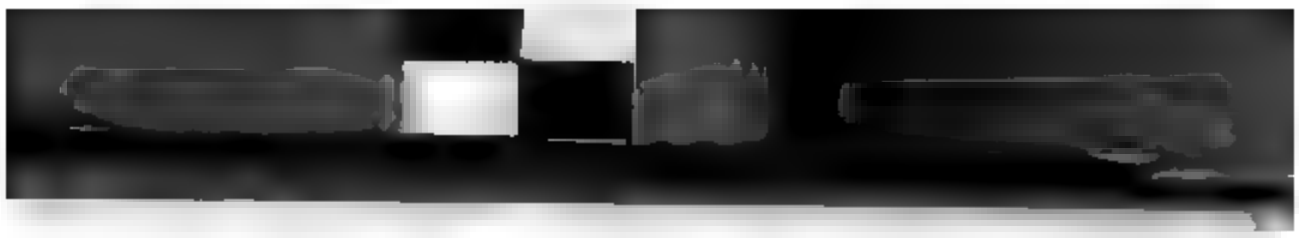
Sarah Bond changed colour; and then, while stooping to kiss her wayward niece, she called her "a foolish child."



PART THE SECOND.

MR. CRAMP, Miss Bond's man of business, was a plain little man, skilled in the turnings and windings of the law, and could not be said to recognise distinctly any other code of morals.

On this particular morning, after a few common-place observations, he made a somewhat strange inquiry. "Had Miss Bond heard that Mr. Alfred Bond had come over to England?" No: she had not heard it. It was, Mr. Cramp *insinuated* (for he never *said* anything directly)—it was rather an awkward circumstance, Mr. Alfred Bond's coming to England.



Miss Bond opened her wide eyes still more widely. She knew that Mr. Alfred Bond was the heir-at-law to the property bequeathed her father; but what of that? he had never, that she heard of, dreamed of disputing the will; and she never felt one pang of insecurity as to the possessions which had of late grown so deeply into her heart. At this unexpected intimation she felt the blood rush through her veins. In all her trials—and they had been many—in all her illnesses, not a few—she had never fainted, never fallen into that symptom of weak-mindedness, a fit of hysterics; but now she sat without power of speech, looking into Mr. Cramp's round face.

"My dear Miss Bond, you are not ill, I hope?" exclaimed Mr. Cramp. "I pray you to bear up; what has been said is doubtless wrong—must be wrong; a threat of the opposite party—an undefined threat, which we must prepare ourselves to meet in a lawyer-like way. Hope for the best, and prepare"——

"For what sir?" inquired Miss Bond, gaspingly.

"For any—anything—that is my plan. Unfortunately, the only way to deal with the world, so as to meet it on equal terms, is to think every man a rogue. It is a deeply painful view to take of human nature, and it agonizes me to do so. Let me, however, intreat you to bear up"——

"Against what, sir?" said Sarah Bond abruptly, and almost fiercely, for now Mr. Cramp's face was reduced to its original size, and she had collected her ideas. "There are few things I could *not* bear up against, but I must know what I have to sustain."

"Your father's will, my dear lady, is safe; the document, leaving everything to you, that is safe, and all other documents are safe enough, except Cornelius Bond Hobart's will—the will bequeathing the property to your uncle. *Where* is that will to be found? for if Alfred Bond proceeds, the veritable document must be produced."

"Why, so it can be, I suppose," said Sarah Bond, relapsing in some degree into agitation; "it was produced when my father inherited the property, as you know."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Bond," he answered; "certainly

not as I *know*, for I had not the honour of being your father's legal adviser at that time. It was my master and subsequent partner. I had not the privilege of your father's confidence until after my colleague's death."

"No one," said Miss Bond, "ever had my father's *confidence*, properly so called; he was very close in all money transactions. The will, however, must be, I think, in Doctors Commons. Go there immediately, Mr. Cramp; and—stay—I will go with you; there it is, and there are the names of the witnesses."

"My dear lady!" expostulated the attorney in the softest tones of his soft voice, "I *have* been there already. I wished to spare a lady of your sensibility as much pain as possible; and so I went there myself, with Mr. Alfred Bond's man of business, whom I happened to know; and I was grieved—cut up, I may say, to the very heart's core, to hear what he said; and he examined the document very closely too—very closely; and, I assure you, spoke in the handsomest, I may say, the *very* handsomest manner of you, of your character, and usefulness, and generosity, and Christian qualities; he did indeed; but we have all our duties to perform in this world; paramount things are duties, Miss Bond, and his is a very painful one."

"What need of all these words to state a simple matter! Have you seen the will?" said Sarah Bond.

"I have."

"Well, and what more is there to see, unless Mr. Alfred Bond denies his relative's power to make a will?"

"Which, I believe, he does not. He says he never made a will; that is all."

"But there *is* the will," maintained Sarah Bond.

"I am very sorry to wound you; but cannot you understand?"

"Speak plainly, if you can, sir," said Sarah Bond, sternly; "speak plainly, if you can; I listen."

"He maintains on the part of his client, that the will is a forgery."

"He maintains a falsehood, then," exclaimed Miss Bond, with a firm determination and dignity of manner that astonished

Mr. Cramp. "If the will be forged, who is the forger? Certainly not my father; for he inherited the property from his elder brother, who died insane. The will is in *his* favour, and not in my father's. Besides, neither of them held any correspondence with the testator for twenty years: he died abroad, and the will was sent to England after his death. Would any there render a gratuitous service to persons they had never seen? Where could be the reason—the motive? How is it, that, till now, Alfred Bond urged no claim? There are reasons," she continued, "reasons to give the world. But I have within me, what passes all reason—a feeling, a conviction, a true positive knowledge, that my father was incapable of being a party to such a crime. He was a stern man, loving money—I grant that—but honest in heart and soul. The only creature he ever wronged was himself. He did *that*, I know. He despoiled himself of peace and comfort, of rest and repose. In *that* he sinned against God's dispensation, who gives that we may give, not merely to others, but lawfully to ourselves. After all, it would have been but a small thing for him to have been without this property, for it gave him no one additional luxury. I wonder, Mr. Cramp, that you, as a man, have courage to stand before me, a poor unprotected woman, and dare to say that will is forged."

While she spoke, Sarah Bond stood forth a new creature in the astonished eyes of the sleek attorney. He absolutely quailed before the vehemence and fervour of the usually mild woman. He assured her she was mistaken; that *he* had not yielded the point that the will was a forgery; that he never would admit that such was the case; that it should be his business to disprove the charge; that he hoped she did not suppose he yielded to the plaintiff, who was resolved to bring the matter into a court of justice. He would only ask her one little question; had she ever seen her father counterfeit different hands? Yes, she said, she had; he could counterfeit, copy, any hand he ever saw, so that the real writer could hardly tell the counterfeit from the original. Mr. Cramp made no direct observation on this, except to beg that she would not mention that "melancholy circumstance" to any one else.

Sarah Bond told him she should not feel bound to make this talent of her father's a crime, by twisting into a *secret* what he used to do as an amusement. Mr. Cramp urged mildly the folly of this, when she had a defence to make ; but she stood all the more firmly upon what she fearlessly considered the dignity of right and truth ; at the same time assuring him, she would to the last contest that *right*, not so much for her own sake, or the sake of one who was dear to her beyond all power of expression, as for the sake of *him* in whose place she stood, and whose honour she would preserve with her life. Mr. Cramp was a shrewd man of business. He considered all Miss Bond's energy on the subject of her father's honour, as romance, though he could not help believing *she* was in earnest about it. He thought it was perfectly in accordance with the old miser's character, that he should procure or make such a document; though he considered it very extraordinary, for many reasons, that it should have imposed upon men more penetrating and learned than himself.

Sarah Bond, after his departure, endeavoured to conceal her anxiety from her niece ; but in vain. Mabel was too clear-sighted ; and it was a relief, as much as an astonishment to her aunt, to see how bravely she bore up against the evil news. Miss Bond did not remember that the knowledge of the *power* of wealth does not belong to sixteen summers. Mabel knew and thought so little of its artificial influence, that she believed her happiness to proceed from birds and flowers, music and dancing, and books—those silent but eloquent tongues that live through centuries, for our advantage ; besides, her young heart welled forth so much hope, that she really did not understand, even if they lost their fortune, their "troublesome fortune," as she called it, how it would seriously affect their happiness. There was no philosophy, no heroism in this ; it was simply the impulse of a bright, sunny, beautiful young mind.

The course of events promised soon to strip Mabel of all except her own hopeful imaginings. Mr. Alfred Bond urged his plea with all the energy and bitterness of one who had been for many years despoiled of his right. His solicitor, soon after his claim was first declared, made an offer to Sarah Bond to settle an

annuity on her and her niece during the term of their natural lives; but this was indignantly spurned by Sarah; from him she would accept no favour; she either had or had not a right to the whole of the property originally left to her uncle. Various circumstances, too tedious to enumerate, combined to prove that the will deposited in Doctors Commons was not a true document; the signature of Cornelius Bond Hobart was disproved by many; second only to one incident in strangeness was the fact, that though sought in every direction, and widely advertised for in the newspapers of the day, the witnesses to the disputed document could not be found—they had vanished.

The incident, so strange as to make more than one lawyer believe for a time that really such a quality as honesty was to be found in the world, was as follows;—Sarah Bond, be it remembered, had never seen the disputed will; she was very anxious to do so; and yet, afterwards, she did not like to visit Doctors Commons with any one. She feared, she knew not what; and yet, above all things, did she desire to see this will with her own eyes.

Mr. Cramp was sitting in his office when a woman, muffled in a cloak, and veiled, entered and seated herself without speaking. After a moment, she unclasped her cloak, loosened the wrapping from her throat, threw back her veil, and asked for a glass of water.

"Bless me, Miss Bond, is it you? I am sure I am much honoured—very much!"

"No honour, sir," she replied, "but necessity. I have been to Doctors Commons; have seen the will—it is my father's writing!"

"You confess this to me?" said Mr. Cramp, drawing back on his chair, and almost gasping for breath.

"I do," she answered; "I proclaim it; it is my father's *copy* of the original will. But how the copy could have been substituted for the real will, I can only conjecture."

"Surmise is something," replied the lawyer, a little relieved; "conjecture sometimes leads to proof."

"My father and uncle lived together when the will came into

their possession. They were in partnership as farmers. My father's habits were precise: he always copied every writing, and indorsed his copies with a large *C*; the very *C* is marked upon the will I have just seen at Doctors Commons."

"That is singular," remarked Cramp; "but it does not show us the way out of the difficulty; on the contrary, that increases. *Somebody*—I don't for an instant suppose Mr. Jacob Bond—in proving the will must have sworn that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, those were the real, which are only copies of the signatures."

"True; and such a mistake was extremely characteristic of my uncle, who performed many strange acts before he was known to be insane. This was doubtless one of them."

"But *where* is the original?" inquired the man of business.

"Heaven knows! I cannot find it; but I am not the less assured of its existence."

"Then we must persist in our plea of the truth of the document in Doctors Commons."

"Certainly not," said Sarah; "you must not persist in a falsehood in my name. If you do, I shall rise up in court and denounce you! I feel it my duty, having seen the will, to state my firm belief that it is a copy of the original will, and nothing more."

Poor Mr. Cramp was dreadfully annoyed. He could, he thought, manage all sorts of clients. He reasoned, he advised, he entreated; he got her counsel to call upon her; but all in vain. She would go into court, she said, herself, if her counsel deserted her. She would *not* give up the cause; she would plead for the sake of her father's honour. She was well assured that the real will was still in existence, and would be discovered—found—sooner or later—though not, perhaps, till she was in her grave.

The senior counsel was so provoked at what he called his client's obstinacy, that he threw up his brief, and the junior took advantage of the circumstance to make a most eloquent speech, enlarging upon the singularity of no appeal having been previously made by the plaintiff—of the extraordinary disappearance of the witnesses—of the straightforward, simple, and

beautiful truthfulness of the defendant; in short, he moved the court to tears, and laid the foundation of his future fortune. But after that day Sarah Bond and her niece, Mabel, were homeless and houseless. Yet I should not say that; for the gates of a gaol gaped widely for the "miser's daughter," though only for a few days; after which society rang with praises, loud and repeated, of Mr. Alfred Bond's liberality, who had discharged the defendant's costs as well as his own. In truth, people talked so much and so loudly about this, that they had altogether forgotten to inquire what had become of Sarah and Mabel.

The clergyman of the parish was their first visiter. He assisted them to look into the future. It was he who conveyed to Sarah, Alfred Bond's determination that she should be held scatheless. The good man delivered this information with the manner of a person who feels he comes with good news, and expects it will be so received; but Sarah Bond could only regard Alfred as the calumniator of her father's memory, the despoiler of her rights. The wild expression of joy in Mabel's face, as she threw herself on her aunt's bosom, gave her to understand that she ought to be thankful for what saved her from a prison.

Words struggled for utterance. She who had borne so much and so bravely, was overcome. Again and again she tried to speak, but for some hours she fell from one fainting fit into another. She had borne up against all disasters, until the power of endurance was overwhelmed; and now, she was attacked by an illness so violent, that it threatened dissolution. At this very time, when she needed so much sympathy, a stern and severe man, in whom there was no pity, a man who had received large sums of money from Miss Bond as a tradesman, and whose account had stood over from a particular request of his own, believing that all was gone, and that he should lose, took advantage of her illness to levy an execution upon the goods, and to demand a sale.

At this time her reason had quite deserted her, and poor Mabel was incapable of thought beyond her duty to her aunt, which made her remove her to a cottage lodging from the turmoil of the town. No one distinctly knew, except Mabel, why Sarah

Bond was so attached to the old furniture, and few cared. And yet more than one kind heart remembered how she had liked the "rubbishing things," and bought in several, resolved that, if she recovered, and ever had "a place of her own again," they would offer them for her acceptance. Her illness was so tedious, that except the humble curate and the good rector, her inquirers had fallen off—for long sickness wears out friends. Some would pause as they passed the cottage window, where the closely pinned-down curtain told of the caution and quiet of sickness; and then they would wonder how poor Miss Bond was; and if they entered the little passage to inquire, they could scarcely recognise in the plainly-dressed, jaded, bent girl, whose eyes knew no change but from weeping to watching, and watching to weeping, the buoyant and beautiful heiress whose words had been law, and who once revelled in luxury. The produce of the sale—though everything, of course, went below its value—left a small surplus, after all debts and expenses were paid; which the clergyman husbanded judiciously, and gave in small portions to Mabel. Alfred Bond himself called to offer her any assistance that might be required, which Mabel declined, coldly and at once.

Patiently and devotedly did she watch beside the couch of her poor aunt; one day suffering the most acute anxiety if the symptoms became worse than usual; the next full of hope as they abated. Did I say that one day after another this was the case? I should have written it, one hour after another; for truly, at times she fluctuated so considerably, that no one less hopeful than Mabel could have continued faithful to hope. As Sarah Bond gained strength, she began to question her as to the past. Mabel spoke cautiously; but, unused to any species of dissimulation, could not conceal the fact, that the old furniture, so valued by her grandfather, and bequeathed with a conditional blessing, was gone—sold! This had a most unhappy effect on the mind of Sarah Bond. She felt as if her father's curse was upon her. She dared not trust herself to speak upon the subject. When the good rector (Mr. Goulding) alluded to the sale, and attempted to enter into particulars, or give an account

of the affairs he had so kindly and so ably managed, she adjured him in so solemn a manner never to speak of the past, if he wished her to retain her reason, that he, unconscious of the motive, and believing it arose entirely from regret at her changed fortunes, avoided it as much as she could desire; and thus she had no opportunity of knowing how much had been saved by the benevolence of a few kind persons. Sarah Bond fell into the very common error of imagining that persons ought to *know* her thoughts and feelings, without her explaining them. But her mind and judgment had been so enfeebled by illness and mental suffering, that, even while she opposed her opinions, she absolutely leaned on Mabel—it was as if the oak had summoned the woodbine to support its branches. That which gave Mabel the most uneasiness, was her determination to leave the cottage as soon as she was able to be removed; and she was seriously displeased because Mabel mentioned this intention to Mr. Goulding. Despite all poor Mabel could urge to the contrary, they quitted the neighbourhood—the sphere of Sarah Bond's sudden elevation, and as sudden depression—alone, at night, and on foot. It was a clear moonlight evening in midsummer, when the twilight can hardly be said to give place to darkness; and when the moon shines out so very brightly, that the stars are reduced to pale lonely sparks of *white* rather than *light*, in the blue sky. It was a lovely evening; the widow with whom they had lodged was not aware of their intention until about an hour before their departure. She was very poor and ignorant, but her nature was kind; and when Sarah Bond pressed upon her, out of her own scanty store, a little present of money beyond her stipulated rent, she would not take it, but accompanied them to the little gate with many tears, receiving charge of a farewell letter to the rector. "And haven't you one to leave me for the curate?" she inquired. "Deary me! but I'm sure for every once the old gentleman came when Miss Bond was so bad, the curate came three times; and no letter for him! deary, oh, deary me!"

"Why did you not put me in mind to write to Mr. Lyset, Mabel?" inquired her aunt, after the gate, upon which the poor woman leaned, had closed.

Mabel made no reply, but Sarah Bond felt the hand she held tightly within hers tremble and throb. How did she then remember the days of her own youth as she thought, "Oh! in mercy *she* might have escaped from that which only so causes the pulses to beat or the hand to tremble!" Neither spoke, but Sarah had turned over the great page of Mabel's heart, while Mabel did not confess, even to herself, that Mr. Lyset's words, however slight, were more deeply cherished than Mr. Goulding's precepts. They had a long walk to take that night, and both wept at first; but however sad and oppressed the mind and spirits may be, there is a soothing and balmy influence in nature that lulls, if it does not dispel, sorrow; every breeze was perfumed; as they passed the hedges, there was a rustling and murmuring of birds amongst the leaves; and Mabel could not forbear an exclamation of delight when she saw a narrow river, now half-shadowed, then bright in the moonbeams, bounding in one place like a thing of life, then brawling around sundry large stones that impeded its progress, again subsiding into silence, and flowing onward to where a little foot bridge, over which they had to pass, arched its course; beyond this was the church, and there Mabel knew they were to wait the coach which was to convey them to a village many miles from their old homes, and where Sarah Bond had accidentally heard there was a chance of establishing a little school. Mabel paused for a moment to look at the venerable church standing by the highway, the clergyman's house crouching in the grove behind. The hooting and wheeling of the old owls in the ivied tower was a link of life. Sarah Bond passed the turn-stile that led into the churchyard, followed by Mabel, who shuddered when she found herself surrounded by damp grass-green graves, and beneath the shadows of old yew-trees.

She knew not where her aunt was going, but followed her silently. Sarah Bond led the way to a lowly grave, marked by a simple headstone. She knelt down by its side, and while her bosom throbbed, she prayed earnestly, deeply, within her very soul – she prayed, now a faded aged woman—she prayed above the ashes, the crumbling bones of him she had loved

with a love that never changes—a love that is green when the head is gray—that Mabel might never suffer as she had suffered. Relieved by these devotional exercises, Sarah rose, and the humble and stricken pair bade adieu to the melancholy scene, and betook themselves to their toilsome journey. Fortunately, the stage overtook them, and having with some difficulty obtained seats, they were in due time deposited in a village, where Sarah felt there would be no eyes to pry into their poverty, no ears to hear of it, no tongue to tell thereof, and point them out "as the poor ladies that once were rich." This was a great relief, though it came of pride, and she knew it; and she said within herself, "When health strengthens my body, I will wrestle with this feeling, for it is unchristian." She never even to Mabel alluded to what was heaviest on her mind—the loss of the old furniture; though she cheered her niece by the assurance that after a few months, if the Almighty blessed the exertions they must make for their own support, she would write to their friend Mr. Goulding, and say where they were; by "that time," she said, she hoped to be humble, as a Christian should be. After this assurance was given, it was astonishing to see how Mabel revived. Her steps recovered their elasticity, her eyes their brightness. Sarah Bond had always great superiority in needlework, and this procured her employment; while Mabel obtained at once, by her grace and correct speaking, two or three day pupils. Her wild and wayward temper had been subdued by change of circumstances; but if she had not found occupation, it would have become morose. Here was not only occupation, but success; success achieved by the most legitimate means—the exertion of her own faculties; there were occasionally bitter tears and many disappointments; and the young soft fingers, so slender and beautiful, were obliged to work in earnest; and she was forced by necessity to rise early and watch late; and then she had to think, not how pounds could be spent, but how pennies could be earned. We need not, however, particularise their labours in this scene of tranquil usefulness. It is sufficient to say that Mabel's little school increased; and that both she and her aunt came at length to feel and speak

thankfully of the uses of adversity, and bless God for taking as well as for giving.

Though Sarah Bond had used every means within her power to conceal her place of retreat, yet she often felt bitterly pained that no one had sought her out. She said she wished to be forgotten, unless she had the power to clear away the imputation on her father's name. And yet, unknown to herself, she cherished the hope, that some one would have traced them, though only to say one cheering word of approbation regarding their attempt at self-independence. Sarah thanked the Almighty greatly for one thing, that Mabel's cheerfulness was continued and unfluctuating, and that her mind seemed to have gathered strength by wholesome exercise. She believed that her affections, if not free, were not entangled, and that her pride had risen against her fancy; and it was beautiful to see how, watching to avoid giving each other pain, striving continually to show the bright side of every matter, the one to the other—and extract sweets instead of bitters from every little incident, led to their actually enjoying even the privations which exercised their tenderness towards each other.

Time wore away many of their sorrows, as Time always does; a kindness we forget to acknowledge, though we often arraign him for spoiling our pleasures. Sarah and Mabel had been taking an evening walk, wondering how little they could exist upon, and feeling that it was a wide step towards independence to have few wants.

"I can see good working in all things," said Mabel; "for if I had obtained the companionship of books, which I so eagerly desired at first, I should not have had the same inducements to pursue my active duties, to read my own heart, and the great book of nature, which is opened alike to peer and peasant; I have found so much to learn, so much to think of by studying objects and persons—reading persons instead of books."

"Yes," added Sarah Bond; "and seeing how much there is to admire in every development of nature, and how much of God there is in every human being."

As they passed along the village street, Mabel observed that

the cottagers looked after them, and several of her little pupils darted their heads in and out of their homes, and laughed; she thought some village fun was afloat, that some rural present of flowers, or butter, or eggs, had been sent—a little mysterious offering for her to guess at; and when she turned to fasten the wicket gate, there were several of the peasants knotted together talking. A sudden exclamation from her aunt, who had entered the cottage, confirmed her suspicion; but it was soon dissipated. In their absence, their old friends Mr. Goulding and the curate had arrived by the coach, and entered their humble dwelling. From a wagon at the same time were lifted several articles of old furniture, which were taken into the cottage, and properly arranged. There were two old chairs, an embroidered stool, a china vase, a cabinet, a table, and the spinnet. Strangely the furniture looked on the sanded floor, but never was gift more grateful to receiver than were these to Sarah Bond. She felt as if a ban was removed from her when she looked upon the old things her father had so valued. Absorbed in the feelings of the moment, she did not even turn to inquire how they had so unexpectedly come there. Nor did she note the cold and constrained greeting which Mabel gave to Mr. Lysct. She herself, after the first self-engrossing thoughts were past, turned to give both gentlemen the cordial reception which their many former kindnesses, not to speak of their apparent connexion with the present gratifying occurrence, deserved. From Mr. Goulding she learnt that the furniture had been bought up by a few old friends, and committed to him to be sent to her as a mark of their good will: he had only delayed bringing it to her, till she should have proved, as he knew she would, superior to her misfortunes by entering on some industrious career.

As the evening closed in, and the astonishment and feelings of their first meeting subsided, Sarah Bond and Mr. Goulding conversed apart, and then, indeed, she listened with a brimming heart and brimming eyes. He told of his young friend's deep attachment to Mabel; how he had prevailed upon him to pause before he declared it, to observe how she endured her changed fortune, and to avoid engaging her affections until he had a

prospect of placing her beyond the reach of the most harrowing of all poverties, that which keeps up an appearance above its means. "Her cheerfulness, her industry, her goodness, have all been noted," he continued. "She has proved herself capable of accommodating herself to her circumstances; the most difficult of all things to a young girl enervated by luxury and indulgence. And if my friend can establish an interest in her affections, he has no higher views of earthly happiness, and I think he ought to have no other. You will, I am sure, forgive me for having counselled the trial. If adversity had followed your exertions, if you had failed instead of succeeded, I should have been sooner at hand to succour and to aid."

Sarah Bond had never forgotten the emotion of Mabel, caused by the mention of the curate's name when they quitted their old neighbourhood, and the very reserve Mabel showed proved to Sarah's searching and clear judgment that the feeling was unchanged. Truly in that hour was her chastened heart joyful and grateful. "Mabel must wait," she said, "until the prospect of advancement becomes a reality; for it would be an ill return of disinterested love for a penniless orphan to become a burden instead of a blessing. Mabel would grow more worthy every day; they were doing well; ay, he might look round the white-washed walls and smile, but they *were* prosperous, healthful, happy, and respected; and if she could only live to see the odium cast upon her father's memory removed, she would not exchange her poverty for her past pride." She frequently afterwards thought of the clergyman's rejoinder, "That riches, like mercy, were as blessed to the giver as to the receiver, and that they only created evil when hoarded or bestowed by a heedless hand."

They certainly were a happy group in that lowly cottage room that evening. Mabel's proud bearing had given place, as if by magic, to a blushing shyness, which she tried to shield from observation by every possible attempt at ease. She talked to Mr. Goulding, and found a thousand uses for the old furniture she had once so heartily despised. "She would sit in the great high chair at the end of that table, with her feet on the stool,

and the china vase in the midst filled with humble cottage flowers—meadow-sweet, and wild roses, and sweet-williams, sea pinks, woodbine, and wild convolvulus! Did not Mr. Goulding like cottage flowers best?" No; the clergyman said he did not, but he thought Mr. Lyset did, and the young man assured her it was so; and then gazed on the only love his heart, his deep, unworn, earnest heart, had throbbed to, with an admiration which is always accompanied by fear, lest something should prevent the realization of the one great earthly hope.

And Mabel was more fitful than her aunt had ever seen her. Fearful lest her secret, as she thought it, should be discovered, she made as many turns and windings as a hare; and yet, unskilled in disguising her feelings, after spending many words in arranging and rearranging, she suddenly wished that the spinnet could be opened. "If," she exclaimed, "*that* could be opened, I should be able to teach Mary Godwin music; and her mother seemed to wish it so much; surely we can open the instrument?"

"It has not been opened for years," replied Miss Bond; "and I remember, once before, Mabel wished it opened, and I refused, lest forcing the lock might harm the marqueterie, of which my poor mother was so fond. It has never been opened since her death." But Mabel's desire was of too much consequence, in her lover's eyes, to be passed over, although all seemed agreed that if it were opened it could not be played upon; so in a few minutes he procured a smith, who said he would remove the hinges, and then unscrew the lock from the inside, which would not injure the cover. This was done; but greatly to poor Mabel's dismay, the cavity where the strings once had been, was filled with old papers

"Now, is not this provoking?" said Mabel, flinging out first one and then another bundle of letters. "Is not this provoking?"

"No, no," exclaimed Sarah Bond, grasping a lean, long, parchment, round which was bound an abundance of tape. "No. Who knows what may be found here?" At once the idea was caught; Mabel thought no more of the strings. "I cannot,"

said Sarah Bond to Mr. Goulding, "untie this; can you?" Her fingers trembled, and she sank on her knees by the clergyman's side. The eyes of the little group were fixed upon him; not a word was spoken; every breath was hushed; slowly he unfastened knot after knot; at last the parchment was unfolded; still, neither Sarah Bond nor Mabel spoke; the latter gasped for breath—her lips apart, her cheeks flushed; while Sarah's hands were clasped together, locked upon her bosom, and every vestige of colour had deserted her face.

"Be calm, my dear friend," he said, after glancing his eyes over the parchment; "be calm. You have experienced enough of the changes and chances of this world not to build too quickly upon any foundation but the one—the goodness of God! I do believe this is an especial proof of His Providence, for I do think this is Cornelius Bond Hobart's original will in your uncle's favour."

It would be useless to attempt a description of the scene that followed; but the joy at the *reality* of the discovery was a heartful temperate joy—the joy of chastened hearts. Sarah Bond, blessing God, above all things, that, go the law as it would, her father's memory would now be held as the memory of an honest man; that he had, as she had said, copied, not forged the will. The shadow cast upon her father's grave was removed; and she was indeed happy. She assured the rector how useful adversity had been to them—how healthful it had rendered Mabel's mind—and how much better. if they recovered what had been lost, they should know how to employ their means of usefulness. Mr. Lyset's congratulations were not so hearty as Mr. Goulding's; he felt that *now* he was the curate and Mabel the heiress; and he heard the kind good night which Mabel spoke, with a tingling ear. *He* was proud in his own way; and pride, as well as affection, had been gratified by the idea of elevating her he loved. Mabel noted this, and wept during a sleepless night, that he should believe her so unworthy and so ungrateful.

There was much to think of and to do; the witnesses were to be found, and lawyers consulted; and Mr. Cramp was seized with a sudden fit of virtuous indignation against Mr. Alfred

Bond, after Sarah Bond's new "man of business" had succeeded in producing the only one of the witnesses in existence, who, he also discovered, had been purposely kept out of the way, on a former occasion, by some one or other. The delays were vexatious, and the quirks, and turns, and foldings, and doubles innumerable; but they came to an end at last, and Mr. Alfred Bond was obliged in his turn to vacate the old mansion, in which he had revelled—a miser in selfish pleasures.

I have dwelt longer than was perhaps necessary on the *minutiæ* of this relation, the principal events of which are so strongly impressed upon my memory. But the more I have thought over the story, the more I have been struck with the phases and impulses of Sarah Bond's unobtrusive, but deeply-feeling mind; her habits struggling with her feelings, leading me to the conclusion that she would never have become, even with the expanding love of her niece to enlarge her views, thoroughly unmanacled from parsimonious habits but for her lesson in adversity, which, instead of teaching, as it does a worldly mind, the *value of money*, taught her higher nature *its proper uses*.

It was beautiful to see how Mabel grew into her aunt's virtues; and even Mr. Goulding was startled by the energy and thoughtfulness of her character. She soon convinced Mr. Lyset that her prospects grew brighter in his love; and for a time he was romantic enough to wish she had continued penniless, and he had been born a peer, to prove his disinterested affection. This, however, wore away, as man's romance always does, and he absolutely became reconciled to his bride's riches. Sarah Bond was living a very few years ago, beloved and honoured—a fountain of prosperity and blessing to all who needed. There was no useless expenditure, no show, no extravagance in "the establishment," at the old manor-house; but it was pleasant to perceive the prosperity of the poor in the immediate neighbourhood; there was evidence of good heads and kind hearts superintending all moral and intellectual improvements; there were flourishing schools, and benevolent societies, and the constant exercise of individual charities; and many said that Sarah Bond, and her niece and nephew, did more good with hundreds than others

did with thousands. From having had practical experience of poverty, they understood how to remedy its wants, and minister to its sorrows; and to the last hour of her prolonged life, Sarah Bond remembered the USES OF ADVERSITY.

THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

POOR little thing, how it limps! Hush! I declare it has gone through the hedge into the churchyard. Wait one, only one moment, dear sister, and I shall certainly catch it;"—and over the churchyard stile bounded Rose Sunderland, as lightly as a sunbeam, or, I should rather say, to be in keeping with the time and place, as lightly

as a moonbeam; for that favourite orb of love and ladies had risen, even while the golden hue of an autumnal sun lingered in the sky, and its pale uncertain beams silvered the early dew-drops, which the gay and thoughtless girl shook from their verdant beds in her rapid movements. But Rose cared little about disturbing dewdrops, or, indeed, anything else that interfered with the pursuit which occupied her for the moment. With the eagerness of sixteen, she had pursued a young leveret among the silent tombs, as thoughtlessly as if she trod only on the sweet wild-thyme, or humble daisy; and when she had nearly wearied out the object of her anxiety, she saw it take shelter under the worn arch of an ancient monument with evident satisfaction, convinced that now she could secure her prize, if Margaret would come to her assistance.

"Sister, sister," repeated she, eagerly, "come!—if we do not take it, it will surely become the prey of some weazel or cub-fox before morning."

Margaret slowly passed the stile.

"One would think you were pacing to a funeral," said Rose, pettishly. "If you will do nothing else, stand there at least, and—now I have it!" exclaimed she, joyously; it's little heart pants—poor thing! I wonder how it got injured."

"Stop!" replied her sister, in a low agitated voice; "you forget—yet how can you forget?—who it is that rests here; who——" She placed her hand upon a plain stone pedestal, but strong and increasing emotion prevented her finishing the sentence.

"My dear Margaret, forgive me! It is ever thus. I am fated to be your misery. I am sure I never thought——"

"Think now, then. Rose, if it be but for a moment: think—think that only one little year has passed since he was with us; since his voice, so wise, and yet so sweet, was the music of our cottage—his kindness the oil and honey of our existence. Though the arrow had entered into his soul, it festered not; for no corruption was there! When he was reviled, he reviled not again; and though his heart was broken, his last words were, 'Lord, thy will, not mine, be done!' My dear, dear father!" she con-

tinued, sinking at the same moment upon her knees, and clasping her hands in devout agony, "teach me to be like thee!"

"Say *me*, rather," ejaculated the sobbing Rose, whose grief became as vivid as had been her exultation;—"say, teach Rose to be like thee You are like our father; but I am nothing!—anything! Oh, Margaret! can you forgive me? There; I'll let the hare go this moment. I'll do anything you wish—indeed I will."

"Do let it go," replied Margaret Sunderland, who had quickly recovered her self-possession; "it would be ill-done to permit any suffering near his grave."

After a brief pause, she rose from her knees, and passing her arm through that of her sister, left the churchyard to its moonlight solitude.

The Widow Sunderland dwelt on the banks of the River Witham, and the path the sisters had taken led for some time along the picturesque meadows that sloped to the very water's edge. As they pursued their way, an opening amid the trees discovered the beautiful window in Lincoln Cathedral—at once the pride and boast of that venerable city; the beams of the moon were full upon it, and its varied panes glittered like many-tinted silver in the placid yet wavering light. "How beautiful!" exclaimed Rose. Margaret sighed. "Is it not beautiful?" interrogated the gay-hearted girl. "Yes, Rose; but methinks I more admire these lofty towers, standing out against the clear night-sky, and looking, not like relics, but giants of the olden days. We have no right to upbraid Time in this instance; for he,

> ——— 'gentlest among the thralls
> Of Destiny, upon whose wounds hath laid
> His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
> From the wan moon, upon the towers and walls,
> Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.'

Time and man have loved those glorious towers, and I love them better than the moon-tinted window; for see, Rose, a cloud has veiled her brightness, and ——and now my towers are as prominent as ever, while your window is obscured."

"You would draw a moral from that, my wise sister."

"It would be quaint, and, I fear," replied Margaret, "an old song to, perhaps, not a new tune; signifying, that much that is excellent and beautiful is lost, not having the advantage of a good light."

"Sister, I forgot to tell you that I met Lady Louisa Calcraft this morning at the library, and she took no notice of me. I am sure she knew me, for she said something to a gentleman who was with her, and I distinguished the words, 'dead father,' and 'ruined fortunes.'"

"The ban is upon you, and upon us all, Rose," replied Margaret, turning her pale but beautiful countenance towards her sister—"the ban

——— 'Of buried hopes,
And prospects faded.'

Would to God that were all!—that any sacrifice on my part could pay the debts my poor father, in his honest but wild speculations, incurred; and then I could return the haughty stare of those who worshipped, it appears, not us, but our prosperity, and now scorn the daughters of a ruined house. The Calcrafts in Lincoln!—but they are everywhere. I could ill have borne a scornful look from one of them."

"They are friends of Ernest Heathwood, are they not?"

A deep and glowing crimson, which luckily the obscurity of the night preserved from observation, mantled the cheeks of Margaret Sunderland, while she replied—

"Yes, I believe so; but, dear Rose, you might have spared me the mention of his name."

"You will be more angry with me when you know that this morning I also saw Ernest, and he requested—prevailed on me to———"

"To what?"

"To take a letter to you."

Again the tell-tale blood rushed to the maiden's face, and as quickly receded, leaving her fine features pale and rigid as chiselled alabaster. It was long ere she recovered herself sufficiently to form any determination, much less arrange her words

for utterance; but the only manifestation of displeasure she evinced towards her thoughtless sister, was by withdrawing her arm, and walking resolutely forward, unaided and alone.

Enough has been, doubtless, gathered from this conversation to show that Margaret and Rose were the daughters of a ruined merchant—of one, indeed, who had been a prince yesterday, and a beggar to-day—of one whose argosies had gone forth, but returned no more—whose name one year would have guaranteed millions, yet who died the next, wanting a shilling. Maurice Sunderland had cheerfully surrendered all to his creditors; yet that all was insufficient to satisfy the claims made, and justly made, upon him. House, plate, jewels, servants, had all been sacrificed. Not a vestige of their former prosperity lingered; and they who had revelled in superfluities, now wanted the most common necessaries of life. A small jointure alone remained; and in that his wife had only a life interest. Margaret was many years older than her sister; and in his agony, their father wished that the grave had closed over them, as it had over his other children, before this great sorrow had come upon them.

His wife was vain, weak, selfish; a woman who knew not what it was to grow old gracefully, and who haunted youthful pleasures with a wrinkled brow, a flaxen wig, and a painted cheek. Her mind was inconceivably small; she wept more for the loss of her diamonds and Dresden than for her husband's misfortunes; and mourned incessantly that her Mino, her darling, her exquisite poodle, was of necessity deprived of his chicken panada! Being a man of no ordinary intellectual powers, Mr. Sunderland had chosen her—no one knew why!—from the love of contrast, perhaps; or the then, as well as now, prevailing opinion, that silly women make the most tender wives; or, perhaps, smitten with her pretty face—time out of mind the matrimonial bait for wise men as well as fools! But certainly no one could have imagined her to have been the mother of such a being as Margaret Sunderland. One little anecdote will serve to show the nature of Margaret's principles—and it is to be hoped, act as a lesson to many similarly circumstanced, who seem not aware that honesty demands the sacrifice of *all;* so

that, in the emphatic words of Scripture, we may "owe no man anything, but to love one another." When her father was making out an inventory of his personal property for the benefit of his creditors, Margaret entered the room with a noiseless step, and placed before him a large casket, containing all the jewels she possessed. The old man laid down the pen, and looked into her sweet face, without a word.

"These were only valuable, dear father, because you gave them, and loved to see me wear such finery;—in our future dwelling they would be worse than useless;—take them, and let them, for my sake, be appropriated to the payment of our debts."

"Not so, my child; you have nothing to do with"—

She prevented the sentence being finished by an affectionate kiss.

"I will not suffer you to say so, because it makes me as if not one with you. If you do not take them I will sell them myself, and send the money where it may be required."

Mr. Sunderland unclosed a portion of the casket, and his eyes rested on a tiara of the finest oriental pearl. "I remember when you last wore this, my child; it was at the gallant fête given at Hampstead, by the rich Jew of Cheapside. How beautiful it looked in your dark hair."

"And does not this look as beautiful, father?" exclaimed Margaret, snatching a white rose from an overturned vase of flowers, and placing it on her head. "When we live in a nice country cottage, you shall gather one for me every summer morning."

"But the winter—the winter will come there, girl, as well as here, and where then shall I gather roses?"

"We will then, father, live upon memory—and upon hope!" She hardly dared trust herself to pronounce that little word *hope*, which, to a really broken heart, sounds more like mockery than consolation. Her father looked mournfully into her face, and shook his head in bitter silence; he then reclosed the casket, and would have placed it in her hands.

"They are the only portion left you, Margaret."

"Not so, father; they would take a portion from me."

"How, child?"

"An honest conscience! I cannot keep them; they were bought with your money for the daughter of the rich—they would not, dearest father, become the daughter of a poor man. All I ask is, permission to imitate your example—You give up all: O! suffer me to do the same, and do not suppose so meanly of your own girl, as that she valued these more than self-approbation, whose silent voice is sweeter than the applause of courts or kings."

Maurice Sunderland was neither a harsh man nor a stern father; he had loved and admired his daughter, but he had never known her till that moment. He made no reply to her words, but folded her silently to his breast; and she felt tears—the first she had ever known him shed—falling upon her brow.

These misfortunes may be considered the commencement of Margaret's trials. The family removed to Lincoln, as one or two relatives lived there, who could forward the plans Miss Sunderland had formed for their support. Her affection for her father would not permit her to leave him to the care of a giddy, childish sister, and her almost idiotic mother; particularly as his health was visibly sinking, and nature appeared unable to repair the inroads of disease. She, therefore, accepted most joyfully the charge of the education of four little girls, her cousins, who were to remain with her only during the day, as their parents resided in the good city of Lincoln. Her father raised no obstacle to this plan; though his withered cheek flushed, and his hand trembled, the first day that he saw his beautiful Margaret quietly arranging, and superintending her *élèves* in the back parlour of their cottage, which she had converted into a school-room; but her mother's caprice and spirit of contradiction was a constant source of mortification, although it tended still more to draw forth her daughter's virtues: she was never satisfied; always regretting their past splendour—always reproaching poor Margaret with having degraded her family, by condescending to become a "school-mistress;" and yet thoughtlessly squandering her hard earnings on selfish enjoyments. This was not all;—

no one who has only *read* of "The delightful task of teaching the young idea how to shoot," can form an estimate of the self-denial which must be the portion of an instructress, particularly if she be conscientious in the discharge of her duty. All influences, to be useful, must be exercised with discretion; and it is but one little step from dominion to tyranny. Margaret was, therefore, obliged to practise as well as preach; and, indeed, one without the other is always unavailing; she had to watch, not only herself but others, so that her maxims might be really useful to those she sought to improve. She wished to make them not only accomplished, but informed; and her "new system," as it was called, was subject to many animadversions, both from her relatives and their friends; who, as usual on such occasions, quite forgot what Miss Sunderland *had been*, in what she was; treated her merely as "the governess," and admitted her only as such to their houses.

•Of all persons doomed by the wavering scale of fortune to earn their own bread, none are so much to be felt for as governesses. The servant, when her work is done, has an hour or two that she can call her own, and she has no ambition beyond her sphere. But the governess has no sphere—she is considered—part of the kitchen—part of the drawing-room;—from the latter she is often expelled, and from the former she turns with disgust. She struggles between a double existence; she is a sort of amphibious creation, belonging to two separate states. She must appear like a gentlewoman, while she hardly receives the wages of a lady's maid; she must be "accomplished and refined," yet keep her accomplishments out of the way till called for; and support insult, as if she were devoid of feeling. Heaven help those who are obliged to go "a governessing," for they can expect but little help from earth!—Volumes might be filled by "The Trials" of "a Governess."

At one of those visits, which she continually shrunk from, and only endured as an occasional penance, she met the very Ernest Heathwood, to whom Rose so unwittingly alluded during their evening walk. The eldest son of a baronet, who, with his new honours, had changed, it was understood, a mercantile for a

somewhat aristocratic name, was a likely person to attract the attention, and win the civilities, of all within his circle; and he was welcomed to the mansion of Miss Sunderland's relatives with extraordinary courtesy. Margaret, always collected, always dignified, sought neither to attract, nor avoid, his attentions; but silently suffered all the little manœuvres of second-rate country town society, to take their course. The anxiety that some mothers evinced to crowd a tribe of ill-dressed daughters to a tuneless piano, and there show off their skill in the various departments of first, second, and third harmony; while others contented themselves with exhibiting the more quiet, and, consequently, more endurable litter, of card drawings and Poonah painting, could only excite a feeling of pity in such a mind as Margaret's. Pity, that woman should so thoroughly mistake the end and aim of her creation, as to descend to be the mistress of a puppet-show—and herself enact first puppet; and something more severe than pity towards the other sex, who outwardly encourage, while they inwardly despise, such petty traps of slavery. "An age," reflected Margaret, "which values itself on caricature, parody, or burlesque, can produce little that is sublime, either in genius or virtue; yet these qualities, and the display of imperfect, and, in nine cases out of ten, more senseless accomplishments, amuse: and we live in an age that must be *amused*, though our best and noblest feelings pay the penalty;" and she employed her slender fingers with ten-fold care, to build up the card-castle, which her little pupil, Cicely, had thrown down.

"It is abominable," whispered her sister, who that evening had accompanied her, "to hear such bad music, while *you* could give us so much that is good." A quiet motion of her sister's finger to her lips prevented further observation; and the card-castle bid fair to mount three stories high, when, suddenly, Ernest Heathwood turned round, and, addressing himself to the fair architect, asked if now she would favour them, for he was sure she could. "O, yes," observed one of the dowagers; "of course, Miss Sunderland *can* and *will*; she *teaches* so well, that she must be a proficient." Some feeling of pride, perhaps (for it

will linger, despite our better judgment), called so exquisite a blush to Margaret's cheek, and young Heathwood gazed on her with such respectful, yet visible admiration, that, had she not been "only a governess," the entire female sex, likely to be married, or given in marriage, would have thrown up the game as hopeless; but the eldest son of a rich baronet would never think of the daughter of a broken merchant—*and a governess!* the thing was impossible—quite.

What Ernest Heathwood did think while Margaret commenced that sweet ballad of Moore's, "All that's bright must fade," it is impossible to say; but a thrill, amounting to anguish, was felt by every one in the room, by the peculiar manner in which she pronounced the following lines, as if they were the pure echo, the true feeling of the sweet Indian melody:—

"Who would seek or prize
Delights that end in aching?
Who would trust to ties
That every hour are breaking?"

Then it was that Ernest Heathwood saw into her very soul, and felt that she must indeed have known change and misfortune.

Music is dangerous from lips of beauty, but more dangerous from those of feeling: the union of both was too much for Ernest's philosophy; and he was, it must be confessed, somewhat bewildered during the remainder of the evening. She inspired him not only with interest, but admiration; and he felt more anxiety than he cared to express, when her history was truly, though, it appeared to him, coldly communicated by her relative, the next day, with the additional intelligence, that her father had been seized only that morning with paralysis, and that little hopes were entertained of his recovery! He called constantly at the cottage; but it was not until some time after the bereavement, which Margaret, above all, lamented, that he saw again the being for whom he felt more interest than ever.

There are peculiar circumstances which train our susceptibilities to receive impressions, and misfortune either softens or hardens the heart: the incapacity of her mother, the volatility

of her sister, rendered them both unfit companions for the high-minded Margaret; and she might well be pardoned for anticipating the evening that now invariably brought Ernest to the cottage, as a time when, free from toil and restraint, she would meet the sympathy and tenderness, without which a woman's heart must be sad and unsatisfied. She was not, like many other wise and prudent people, at all aware of the danger of her position. She had no idea that, while seeking to alleviate or dispel sorrow by what she termed friendly converse, a deep and lasting feeling was silently, but surely, implanting itself in her bosom, and that time and opportunity were fostering it, either for her happiness or misery. Her girlhood had passed without any of what we may call the frippery of love. How she had escaped the contagion of flirtation, is wonderful. Perhaps it might be attributed to a certain reserve of manner, which served as a beacon to fools and puppies, to warn them off whenever it was their fortune to encounter Margaret Sunderland.

Among the wealthy citizens many had sought her hand; but she was not to be courted by a golden shower; and after her father's failure, none remembered the beautiful daughter of the unfortunate merchant: it was, therefore, not to be wondered at, that she valued him who valued her for herself, and herself only —and dreamed the dream that can be dreamed but once!

Many evenings were spent in that full and perfect trustfulness, which pure and virtuous hearts alone experience. So certain indeed appeared the prospect of her happiness, that she sometimes doubted its reality; and when a doubt as to the future did arise, it pressed so heavily, so very heavily, upon her heart, that, with a gasping eagerness which excited her own astonishment, she cast it from her, as a burden too much for her to bear.

She had known and loved Ernest for some months, when one morning their only servant interrupted her little school, by saying, that a gentleman in the parlour wished to speak to her. On entering the room, a short, dark, elderly man returned her graceful salutation, with an uncouth effort at ease and self-possession.

"Miss Sunderland, I presume?"

She bowed: a long pause succeeded, which neither seemed willing to interrupt; and when Margaret raised her eyes to his, there was something—she could hardly tell what—that made her think him the bearer of evil tidings. Yet was the countenance not unpleasing to look upon—the expanded and somewhat elevated brow—the round full eye, that had rather a benign than stern expression, would have betokened a kind, and even gentle being, had not the lower portion of the face boded heaviness and severity—the mouth was thin and compressed—the chin lean and short—the nose looked as if nature had at first intended to mould it according to the most approved of Grecian features, but suddenly changing her plan, left it a rude piece of unfinished workmanship.

"Madam," he at last commenced; "you are, I believe, acquainted with my son?"

"Sir!"

"My son, Mr. Ernest Heathwood?"

Again Margaret replied by bowing.

"I have resided many years abroad, but if your father was living he would know me well."

The word "father" was ever a talisman to poor Margaret, and she looked into his face, as if imploring him to state how he had known her parent. He evidently did not understand the appeal; and continued, in a constrained manner, his lips compressed, so as scarcely to permit egress to his words, and his eyes bent on the carpet, unwilling to meet her now fixed and anxious gaze.

"I have every respect for you, Miss Sunderland; and yet I feel it but right to mention in time, that an union between you and my son, is what I never could—never will—agree to. The title (and the new baronet drew up his little person with much dignity) I cannot prevent his having, but a shilling of my money goes not with it, unless he marries with my perfect consent. Forgive me, young lady, I esteem your character; I—I—;" he raised his eyes, and the death-like hue of Margaret's features seemed, for the first time, to give him the idea that he spoke to a being endowed with feeling.

"Miss Sunderland, I was not prepared for this. I had

hoped matters had not gone so far. I—then you really love Ernest?"

"Whatever my sentiments, sir, may be towards your son, she replied—all the proud woman roused within her—"I would never entail beggary on him."

"Well spoken, faith; and I am sure, Miss Sunderland, that had you—in short, you must be aware this is a very delicate subject; but had you fortune equal to my hopes for Ernest, I would prefer you—upon my word I would—though I never saw you till this moment—to any woman in England. You see," he persisted, assuming the tone of low-bred confidence; "I have, as a mercantile man, had many losses; perhaps you know that?" He paused for a reply, which Margaret could not give. "These losses must be repaired, and there is only one way to do so. If I had not the station to support which I have, it would not signify; but as a man of title, the truth is, I require, and must have, ten or twenty thousand pounds within a very little time—there is but one way to obtain it—you would not—(and here the man of wealth, and the man of rank, forgot himself in the husband and the father) you would not, I am sure, by persisting in this love affair, entail ruin upon me and mine. Ernest has two sisters and a mother, Miss Sunderland."

Margaret's breath came short and quick, the room reeled round, and, as she endeavoured to move to open the window, she must have fallen, but for the support which Sir Thomas Heathwood afforded her.

"I will never bring ruin on any one," she said at last. "What is it you require of me?"

"To write and reject, fully and entirely, my son's addresses, and never, never see him more."

"This, sir, I cannot; I will see him once more, for the last time, this evening. I will practise no deceit, but I will tell him what is necessary. There, sir, you have my word; and may the Almighty ever preserve you and yours from the bitterness of poverty!"

Well might the old baronet dread the effects of another interview between Margaret and his son, when he himself experienced

such a sensation of awe and love towards this self-denying girl; yet such was the holy truth of her resolve, that he had not the power to dispute it. He left the cottage, after various awkward attempts to give utterance to his contending feelings.

"Margaret!" screamed her mother, as she was passing to her own room—"do, Margaret, just come here, and see how well—how young I look with my widow's cap—a conceit of my own, this trimming—when you are married to Ernest, I shall dress in white. I should like to know what sort of a man his father is, and if he is likely to live long or die soon. Dear Margaret," added the poor woman, in all the pure vulgarity of mind, "I should so like to hear a child of mine called 'my lady!'" This was too much for her poor daughter, who rushed into her little chamber, and, burying her face in her hands, yielded to emotions which, for a time, were too powerful to submit to the control of reason.

The evening of that eventful day was clear and balmy; the flowers of early spring disseminated their fragrance over every little weed and blade of grass, till they were all impregnated with a most sweet odour: the few insects which the April sun calls into existence, clung wearily to the young tendrils for support, and the oak-leaves of the past autumn still rustled beneath the tread of the creeping hedge-hog or swift-footed hare. It was a tranquil hour, and Margaret Sunderland repined at its tranquillity. "I could have better parted from him in storm and tempest, than amid such a scene as this," she said, as she leaned against a gnarled trunk of a withered beech-tree for support. The next moment Ernest was at her side.

"And thus, to please the avarice of my father, Margaret, you cast me off for ever—you turn me adrift—you consent to my union with another, though you have often said, that the union, unhallowed by affection, was indeed unholy. Is this consistent?"

"I come not here to reason, but to part from you—to say, Ernest Heathwood, what I never said before, that so true is my affection for you, that I will kneel to my Maker, and fervently and earnestly implore Him to bless you, to bless your bride, to

multiply happiness and prosperity to your house, and to increase exceedingly your riches and good name."

"Riches!" repeated her lover (like all lovers) contemptuously; "with you I should not need them."

"But your family, you can save them from the misery of poverty—from the plague-spot that marks, and blights, and curses all whom it approaches. I should have remembered," she added, with unwonted asperity, "that it rested upon us, and not have suffered you to be contaminated by its influence."

Many were the words he used, and the reasons he urged, to shake what he called her mad resolve. He appealed to her affections, but they were too strongly enlisted on the side of duty to heed his arguments; and, after some reproaches on the score of caprice and inconsistency, which she bore with more patience than women so circumstanced generally possess, he left her under feelings of strong excitement and displeasure. He had not given himself time to consider the sacrifice she made; he felt as if she deserted him from a feeling of over-strained pride, and bitterly hinted (though he knew it to be untrue at the time), that it might be she had suddenly formed some other attachment. When she found herself indeed alone, in the dim twilight, at their old trysting-spot—though while he was present she had repelled the last charge with true womanly contempt—she would fain have recalled him, to reiterate her blessing, and assure him, that though her resolve was unchangeable, she loved him with a pure and unsullied faith. Had he turned on his path, he would have seen her waving him back; and the tears that deluged her pale cheeks would have told him but too truly of the suppressed agony she had endured.

Many weeks elapsed, and she had outwardly recovered her tranquillity, though she was but ill-fitted to go through her daily labours as before, when Rose so unexpectedly announced that she had seen Ernest, and taken a letter from him. When the sisters entered the little cottage, it was evident that something was necessary to dispel Mrs. Sunderland's ill temper.

"Yes, it's a pretty little thing; what loves of eyes it has, and such nice long ears! But really, Margaret, you must not go out

and leave me at home without a sixpence: there was no silver in your purse, and the postboy came here, and refused to leave a London letter without the money,—it is astonishing how impudent those fellows are,—and so——"

Margaret interrupted her mother, by saying that she left ten or twelve shillings in her purse.

"Aye, very true—so you did; but a woman called with such an assortment of sweet collars, and it is so seldom I have an opportunity now of treating myself to any little bit of dress, that I used them: it was so cheap, only eleven and sixpence, with so lovely a border of double-hem stitch, and the corners worked in the most delicate bunches of fuchsia—here it is."

"And did the letter really go back, mother?"

"I wish you would not call me *mother*—it is so vulgar! every one says mamma, even married women. No; it did not go back: I sent Mary into the little grocer's to borrow half-a-crown. You need not get so red, child: I said you were out—had my purse—and would repay it to-morrow morning."

"Degradation on degradation," thought poor Margaret, as she took the letter: "I cannot repay it to-morrow; that was the last silver in the house: I know not where to get a shilling till next week."

"I must say, Margaret, for a young woman, you are the least communicative person I ever met: you have got that letter by heart by this time, I should imagine. Pray, who is it from?"

Margaret Sunderland seemed perfectly unconscious of the question, but continued the re-perusal of her epistle, as if her mother had not spoken; she then left the room without uttering a single word.

"I must say, Rose, that your sister gives me a great deal of uneasiness," said Mrs. Sunderland; "she is so unlike me in all things—so self-willed—so like your poor father, who, indeed, always made her his companion. She wants tenderness, and——"

"Oh, my dear mamma!" exclaimed the generous, thoughtless Rose, "you cannot think *that*, I am sure. If you only knew what a sacrifice she made to-night to catch you that little hare!

and, as to her purse, I know that the reason she changed colour was, that it contained all the money in the house."

"Then she ought to manage better; I never used to be without money in London: it is very odd——" and so ran on this inconsiderate lady, until the heart of her youngest-born ached within her, from perfect weariness and shame at her selfishness.

"Rose," said Margaret, as the former entered their bedroom, "come hither: you may, perhaps, see Ernest Heathwood again, and you can then return him this;"—she placed the unopened letter in her hand;—"I do not wish to read it, particularly now; it might have a baneful effect upon the honest purpose which, I trust in God, I shall have strength to accomplish. And now, dearest, sit here, and look over this other letter I have received from London."

Rose took the paper that Margaret offered, and moved from opposite the cracked looking-glass which garnished the simple dressing-table.

"I'll stand here, please, sister; I cannot bear to sit opposite that disagreeable, trumpery glass; it makes my nose crooked. Oh! Maggy, do you remember the beautiful mirrors we had in Bedford Square, and my pretty little bed, with its pale pink silk curtains, looped with roses? Heigho! I did not know what a patched quilt meant then;" and she glanced contemptuously at the clean, but humble, coverlet of their simple couch.

"My dear Rose, do be serious, and read."

"What an ungenteel-looking letter!—such coarse paper, and such a scribbely-scrabbely hand!" Whatever the hand or paper might be, after she had fairly commenced, she did not again speak until she had finished the perusal from beginning to end, and then, with one loud cry of joy, she threw herself into her sister's arms.

"Margaret, dear Margaret—to think of your taking this so quietly, when I—my dear sister—I shall certainly lose my senses. We shall be rich, more rich than ever; and you can marry Ernest—dear, kind Ernest—and we can live in London, and keep our carriage, and—Nay, sister, do let me break that odious glass. O, Margaret, I am so happy! let us go tell our

mother—*mamma*—I beg her pardon; and you shall give up your pupils;—dear, beautiful letter! let me read it again;" and the second perusal threw her into greater raptures than the first

"It is better *not* to mention this to our mother, I think," said Margaret, when her sister's ecstacies had in some degree subsided. "And yet she is our parent, and has therefore a right to our confidence, though I know she will endeavour to thwart my resolves."

"Thwart your resolves?" replied Rose, in astonishment; "why, what resolves can you have, except to marry Ernest, and be as happy as the day is long?"

"I shall never marry Ernest Heathwood," replied her sister, in a trembling voice, "though I certainly shall be more happy than I ever anticipated in this world."

"I cannot pretend to understand you," said Rose; "but do let me go and make mamma acquainted with our unlooked-for prosperity:" and she accordingly explained to her mother, that a brother of her father's, one who had ever been on decidedly bad terms with all his relatives, and *their* family more particularly, had died lately in Calcutta, bequeathing by will his property, amounting to many thousands, to his niece, Margaret Sunderland, who, in the words of his singular testament, "had never offended him by word or deed, and must ever be considered a credit to her sex." There is no necessity to recapitulate the ecstacies, plans, and arrangements that succeeded, and in which Margaret took no part.

The next morning she granted her pupils a holiday, and when her mother went out, doubtless for the purpose of propagating the account of their good fortune, Margaret told her sister that she wished to be alone for some time to arrange her plans. She had been so occupied for about two hours, when Rose Sunderland, accompanied by a gentleman, passed the beechen-tree where Margaret and her lover had last met.

"I am sure she will not be angry—it will be an agreeable surprise—and mamma won't be home for a long time yet," said Rose; "I will open the parlour door, and—"

"There I shall find her forming plans for future happiness, in which, perhaps, I am not included," interrupted Ernest Heathwood.

"You are unjust, sir," replied Rose, as they entered the cottage; and in another instant Margaret, with a flushed cheek and a burning brow, had returned the salutation of him she loved. There was more coldness in her manner than he deemed necessary, and, with the impetuosity of a high and ardent spirit, he asked her if she attributed his visit to interested motives.

"No," she replied, "not so; I hold myself incapable of such feelings, and why should I attribute them to you? I tell you now, as I told you when last we met, that my constant prayer is, that God might exceedingly bless you and yours, and save you from poverty, which, in the world's eye, is the extremity of sin."

"But, Margaret," interrupted Rose, as was her wont, "there is no fear of poverty now; and Sir Thomas himself said, that, with even a moderate fortune, he should prefer you to other women."

"I have not even a moderate fortune," replied the noble-minded girl, rising from her seat, and at the same time laying her hand on a pile of accompt-books that she had been examining. "You, Mr. Heathwood, will understand me, if I say that, when I first breathed the air of existence, I became a partaker of my family's fortunes, as they might be, for good or evil."

"And you shared in both, Margaret, and supported both with dignity," said Ernest, eagerly.

"I believe you think so, and I thank you," she replied, while the flush of gratified feeling passed over her fine features. "And now, bear with me for a little, while I explain my future intentions. My poor father's unfortunate failure worked misery for many who trusted in him with a confidence which he deserved, and yet betrayed. I meant not that," she added, hastily, "he did not betray;—but the waves, the winds, and the misfortunes or ill-principles of others, conspired against him, and he fell, overwhelmed with his own and others' ruin. Lips that before had blessed, now cursed *him* they had so fatally trusted, and

every curse seemed to accumulate sufferings which only I was witness to. To the very uttermost—even the ring from his finger—he gave cheerfully to his creditors ; there was no reserve on his part—all. all was sacrificed. Yet, like the daughters of the horse-leech, the cry was still 'Give ! give !' and," she added, with trembling voice, "at last he did give—even his existence ! and I who knew so well the honour of his noble nature, at the very time when his cold corpse lingered in the house,—because I lacked the means of decent burial,—was doomed to receive letters, and hear complaints of his injustice. In the silent hour of night I knelt by his coffin ; decay had been merciful ; it spared his features to the last ; and I could count and kiss the furrows which disappointment, and the scornings of a selfish world, had graven on his brow :—but, oh ! how perfectly did I feel, in that melancholy hour, that his spirit was indeed departed, and that my lips rested on nought but cold and senseless clay ; yet I clung, with almost childish infatuation, to the dwelling it had so sweetly inhabited for such a length of years. The hours rolled on, and the grey mists of morning found me in the same spot ; it was then, as the light mingled with, and overcame the departing darkness, that I entered into a compact with the living spirit of my dead father, that, as long as I possessed power to think or act, I would entirely devote my energies to the fulfilment of those engagements, which his necessities compelled him to leave unsatisfied. I am ashamed to say, I nearly forgot my promise ; and though a portion of my hard earnings were regularly devoted to the darling prospect of winning back for my father his unspotted reputation, yet I did form plans of happiness in which his memory had no share. Ernest, for this I have suffered, and must suffer more. I have gone over these books, and find that, after devoting the entire of the many, many thousands now my own to the cherished object, only a few hundreds may remain at my disposal. This is enough—again I say, may you be happy with your dowered bride, and remember that the one consolation —the only one that can support me under this separation, is—that I have done my duty."

Strange as it may seem, young Heathwood did not appear as

much distressed at this resolution as Rose—or, to say the truth, as Margaret—thought he would have been. No matter how heroic, how disinterested the feeling which compels a woman to resign her lover, she naturally expects that the lover will evince a proper quantity of despair at the sad circumstance: and certainly, Ernest, after a pause of a few minutes, during which he seemed more affected by Margaret's noble-mindedness than his own bereavement, entered cordially into her views, and praised the sacrifice (if, with her feelings, so it might be called) with an energy that left no room to doubt his sincerity.

After his departure she pondered these things in her heart, and came to the conclusion, that she had not resigned her affections too soon, for that it was evident he had pretty well succeeded in banishing her from his love; and poor Rose, who had in so little time been twice disappointed in her hopes both of a fortune and a wedding, was reproved with some asperity for conducting Ernest Heathwood, under any circumstances, to their cottage. It is needless to add, that her mother's tears and remonstrances had no effect upon Margaret's purpose; and her lawyer received instructions to remit forthwith to all creditors of the late Maurice Sunderland the full amount of their demands, with interest thereon from the day of his failure!

It required all her firmness to bear up against her mother's complainings; and, above all, against the painful truth established in her mind, that Ernest had ceased to regard her with anything bordering on affection. Strange, that at the very moment we are endeavouring to repress the unavailing passion of the one we love, we secretly—unknowingly, it may be—hope for its continuance!

All "business affairs" were arranged according to her desire; but she was fast sinking under the outward tranquillity which is more fatal than exertion. Listlessly she wandered amid the flowers which Rose loved to cultivate, when the unusual sound of carriage-wheels roused her attention, and, with no ordinary emotion, she saw Sir Thomas and Ernest Heathwood enter the wicket gate, and walk towards the cottage.

"I told you, Miss Sunderland," commenced the old gentleman,

with more agitation, but less embarrassment, than he had shown at their former interview, "that I had need of twenty thousand pounds to support my credit, and save my family from distress. I told you I wished my son to marry a lady possessed of that sum, and I now come to claim you as his bride."

"Sir!"

"Yes, madam: I was your father's largest creditor; and though I had no fraud, nothing dishonourable to allege against him, yet I did not, I confess it, like the idea of my son's being united to his daughter. He was always speculative and imaginative, and I feared you might be the same. The sum you have so nobly repaid me, I looked upon as lost, and you must therefore suffer me to consider it a marriage-portion; it has saved me from ruin, without the sacrifice of my son's happiness."

"How is this?" exclaimed Margaret, fearful of trusting the evidence of her own senses; "I cannot understand—the name—"

"Our original name was Simmons," exclaimed Ernest, eagerly; "but knowing all the circumstances—I never told you—I knew how my father would feel at your disinterested conduct; and now that your trials are past, you will, I trust, no longer doubt me."

"Who said I doubted?" inquired Margaret.

"Even Rose; and here she comes to answer for her crime."

"Nay, dearest sister," exclaimed the laughing girl, "it was only last evening that I saw Ernest, and I have kept out of your way ever since, lest I should discover my secret. Without my frivolity, and the thoughtlessness of another, who, for all that, is dear to us both, Margaret's virtues would never have shone with so steady a light."

"True, Rose, spoken like an angel; I never thought you wise before; it is to be hoped that when your sister changes her name, her mantle may descend upon you," said Ernest.

"She may want wisdom for herself," she continued, archly; "who knows but the most bitter trials of Margaret Sunderland may come after marriage?"

Ernest did not reply to the unjust suspicion, for he had not heard it; his sense, his thought, his heart, were fixed only upon

her who had thrown so bright and cheering a lustre over the impressive truth :—" The good things that belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired."

THE PRIVATE PURSE.

PART THE FIRST.

"LET my niece, Miss Geraldine—I mean, let Mrs. Leeson—know that as soon as she has put off her bridal, and put on her travelling dress, I wish to see her," said Mrs. Gascoigne to her maid, who had not answered her bell until she had rung it twice.

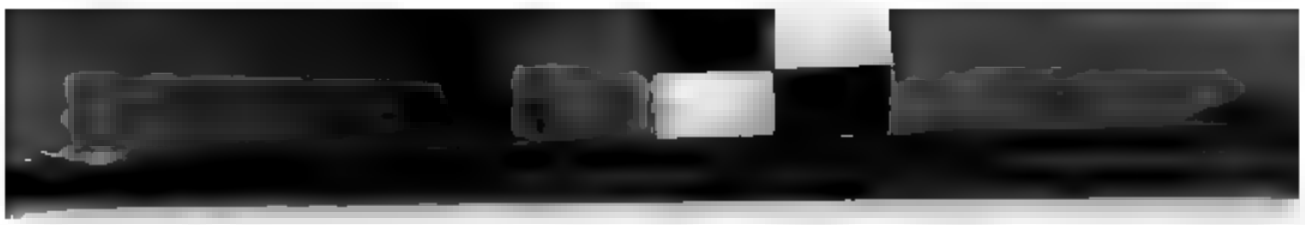
"Yes, ma'am," replied the flushed maiden, who was bowed out with white satin ribbon, as if she too had just been made a bride.

"And listen—When all this mummery is over, take off these white fal-lals, and lay them by; they will do for the next fool of the family who chooses to enter the 'holy bonds'—ah! ah!"

The servant hardly murmured "Yes, ma'am," to this, nor had she quite closed the door on the crackling laugh of her mistress, when she muttered, "Well, that beats all! She to come on a visit to her own sister, on her niece's wedding-day, and grudge me wearing of the ribbons that cost her nothing! But it's just like her! Stingy!—augh! It's no use talking—I can't a-bear stinginess. I wonder why she could not stay below at the breakfast, like other Christians; but it's none of my business. Put by the ribbons, indeed, that never cost her a brass farthing!"

A group of ladies passing from one room to another interrupted this soliloquy, and turned the rippling current of the waiting-maid's small mind from meditation to observation. In an instant she became spell-bound by the white roses that garlanded the bridesmaids' bonnets.

Mrs. Gascoigne, a lady of some five-and-fifty years, who had been a wife for one year and a widow for ten, was occupied after her own fashion. She was seated at a table in her dressing-room, and upon it was her open desk. Her long narrow features were pinched into a mean expression; her hair grew thinly above her brow; and yet it was short and frizzed, as if it had not the heart to grow long. Her lips were thin and compressed, betokening, however, secrecy rather than firmness. I have noted mouths which, though ugly, are of bland and generous forms; but I never saw a mouth like Mrs. Gascoigne's that was not indicative of meanness and subterfuge. Her eyes were fine—that is to say, well set, and of a good colour; but their expression was unpleasing—it was sharp and suspicious. Her dress was neither good nor becoming, and she had flung aside the silver favour which indicated the motive that had drawn her from her own home. A faded purse of blue and white was be-



tween her fingers, and into it she had dropped some guineas—not sovereigns, but old-fashioned golden guineas—which she had, as it were, purloined from her own desk. She shook them once or twice, and an unconscious smile disturbed the gravity of her face—it was evident that she loved the golden chimes. Then she picked out one and put it into its secret hiding-place in her desk. "Forty-nine," she said to herself—"forty-nine will go as far with a foolish girl as fifty; but it's an odd number—she may wonder why it was not fifty." Another was taken from the purse and returned to the drawer. A moment's pause—she looked out a third; a fourth; weighed it for a moment on her well practised finger—it was a thought light, so she exchanged it for one that pleased her better, and it was dropped into the hoard. Another—she chinked the purse again. "Forty-five good guineas—forty and five," she repeated—"hum! quite enough to commence a private purse for the wife of a young banker;" and she shut it to with a determined snap.

"May I come in, dear aunt?" said a sweet face at the door—"may I come in?"

Until the desk was shut and locked she made no answer; and then, affecting not to have recognised tones, the sweetness of which told upon every ear, as the joy bells sound upon the summer air, she inquired, "Who is there?"

"Me, aunt – Geraldine," answered the same music.

"Oh, yes, dear, come in," said Mrs. Gascoigne. For a moment she looked with pride upon the young and lovely being who had that day committed her entire destiny into the hands of one who had promised, with his whole heart and soul, to "love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep him only unto her so long as they both should live."

"Why, dear," exclaimed Mrs. Gascoigne, as the mind returned to its old habits, "what a deal of money that dress must cost! it is a real pity to hack it travelling—a real pity. Dear Geraldine, have you no turned silk you could wear on the journey—eh!"

"You know, aunt, I brought Henry no fortune; so mamma

thought the least thing I might have was a handsome wardrobe;" and she looked as much annoyed as she could have been by anything on such a day.

"Ah, dear—well, that's true; I suppose your mother scraped together all she could to make up the trousseau, and has no little purse to give you, eh?"

"My dear mother," answered the bride—and the ready tears rose to her eyes—"has indeed done everything to make me happy—I was going to say independent—but every woman is dependent upon her husband; and Henry is so gentle and affectionate, I have no fear that he will make me feel he was rich and I was poor. Mamma gave me ten guineas, and," added the fair girl (she had not numbered nineteen summers), with a proud air, "it will be a long time before I spend all that."

"That's my own Geraldine—keep it, dear—don't spend it—keep it. Gold grows by keeping; it does not rust or mildew—keep it; it is power—all that man and woman wants. I know that—by wanting it, Geraldine. Ay, you may smile, and I dare say your mother and all of them think it not true; poor Mr. Gascoigne left me enough, but no more. You, Geraldine, were my god-child—called after me—and I must say that you have been as good and as affectionate as if I had made you a present every birthday, which, perhaps, I might have done, had I not been afraid you would have married your cousin, Arthur Harewell."

"My dearest aunt!" ejaculated Geraldine, in a tone of surprise.

"Oh, yes! I know he was very fond of you; but I hate every one of the Harewells; they are as poor as church mice, and yet as proud of their intellect as if they had been every one city members. Now, my dear, I am going to tell you a secret, which I must not have you tell Henry; your own secrets you may tell him, if you are foolishly fond of talking, but as this is *my* secret, you have no right to tell it."

"No," said Geraldine, somewhat hastily, "I will not tell him your secret, aunt. I have no right to do that, I think."

"Certainly not, my dear; men have odd notions, and it is a

foolish thing to tell them every nonsense; it makes them think little of us women, to keep up a tittle-tattle about every trifle."

Geraldine gave no reply to this. She had made up her mind to tell Henry everything; this was her own right-minded impulse; for her mother, a quiet, amiable, fashionably-thinking woman, fancied she performed her duty when she sent Geraldine to a boarding-school, heard her play and sing, and saw her dance during the vacations—restricted her own expenditure in all things that she might have the best masters, and be as well dressed as girls who had ten times her fortune—a sure way to enfeeble the mind—took it for granted, that, as she knew her catechism, had been confirmed, and went every Sunday to church, her religious education was such as to befit the high calling of a Christian—and had never spoken to her of the duties a woman is required to fulfil as wife and mother, until about a week previous to the wedding-day, when she told her to be affectionate and forbearing, and "not to forget her own dignity." Something she added about the duties of a mother, and the advantage of cold bathing for infants; but quickly concluded by saying there would be "time enough to think of that." No wonder that Geraldine was unable to reply to her aunt's common-places, and at once unravel their fallacy and foresee their danger. There are, to my knowledge, at this moment, when volumes on female education pour from the press—when national education is rendering the lower scarcely inferior to the higher class in solid and useful knowledge — there are scores of well-intentioned ladies, gentlewomen by birth, and in manner, who love their daughters, who would (if they knew how) forward their temporal and eternal welfare in every possible way—and yet do no more than Geraldine Leeson's mother did. Ah! when shall we have a school for mothers?

Mrs. Gascoigne resumed the broken thread of her discourse more quickly than I have finished my digression.

"Well, my dear Geraldine, I have here a little present for you —just enough to prevent your running to your husband's pocket

every moment; but *you must not tell him a word about it*—it is *my* secret. If he or your mother were to know I had scraped together fifty—no, five-and-forty—guineas, for you, they would expect me to go on giving; and the more you give, the more you may give. So, take it with my blessing, child, and take care of it; *spend it secretly* for any little thing you may want, and say nothing about it."

Geraldine was really surprised and pleased; she had never in all her life had so much money of her own, and least of all had she expected it from her "stingy aunt." She reiterated her thanks most sincerely; little thinking she had taken the first step towards deceiving her husband and working her own misery.

"Remember," repeated Mrs. Gascoigne, "remember, it is my secret, and you have *promised;* you cannot conceive how I should suffer if you broke your word." Again Geraldine kissed her, and bade her affectionately farewell—not before she had been twice summoned by her bridemaids.

"I *might* as well," said this dangerous monitor, as she took her seat by the window to observe the departing carriages; "I might as well have taken back that odd five; and then the ten her mother gave her would have just made up the fifty. I hope she'll take care of it, poor dear child! There she goes, and her cousin, Arthur Harewell, handing her in! Well, I shall conceive it my duty to give Henry Leeson a hint to look after his pretty wife when Master Harewell is in the way. It is a very queer world we live in!"

The people who make the world "queer," as they call it, are the first to complain of this queerness; and so it was with Mrs. Gascoigne. Her own marriage had been entirely dictated by interested motives. She married a rich old miser for the sake of his wealth, when she was past forty; and upon her "queer" ways his "queer" ways became engrafted. Geraldine's match pleased her, *because* Mr. Leeson was rich; and she fancied her god-child had inherited her disposition, *because* she had discarded a poor cousin, whom she believed, erroneously, she loved, and married a wealthy man, whom she, as erroneously, believed she

did not love. If Geraldine *had* chanced to like and wed her poor cousin, Mrs. Gascoigne would never have given her five-and-forty pence.

Geraldine Leeson had escaped many of the contaminations of a public school, from a sincere desire to learn thoroughly whatever she undertook; consequently she had little spare time. She knew the sacrifices her mother made that she might become accomplished; and besides, she loved her home dearly and devotedly. She had not left it as early as many children do, so that the home affections, if not full-grown, had taken root before her departure into a community as varied and as dangerous as that of all large schools must be, until their entire system is thoroughly regenerated. Still, as this was a "finishing school," she could not but hear various speculations, on the part of many of the elder girls, as to "when they should come out." How anxious the mamma of one was to get papa into good humour, to spend a winter in Paris—whether he could afford it or not—because her cousin had made an excellent match there; to be sure, the gentleman thought at first, from the style they lived in, that they were very rich, but he knew the difference now; and the other girls laughed at this, and exclaimed, "What fun!" Another mourned bitterly "papa's stinginess," and how *her* poor mamma was obliged to alter the house bills to make them appear more than they were, or else they never could have anything fit to wear; while a third rejoiced that such never could be the case at home, as *her* mamma's pin-money was secured, and she did as she pleased, without consulting any one! All this sort of poisoning is carried on, like all poisonings, secretly: I do believe that few women who undertake the charge of youth, would suffer such observations to go unreproved; but no governess can have ear and eye for fifty, or even five-and-twenty, "grown-up" young ladies, who are permitted to sleep, four or two, in the same room, and to walk attended by foreign teachers, who frequently do not understand the language spoken by their pupils.

Geraldine had escaped systematic corruption; she loved music and dancing for their own sakes, and never cared a great deal

for creating a sensation. She, of course, desired to be loved; but she never degraded affection by calculation. She would have paused, certainly, before she wedded poverty; but she would not have married simply because her lover was rich. So far she was tolerably right; but, unfortunately, many mothers, and hers among the number, have confused notions as to the boundaries of the delicate and indelicate. If love is mentioned, instead of impressing the young mind with a just idea of its sacred nature, its holy attributes, its natural impulses, it is dismissed with an "Oh, fie!" or a reproving look, which at once assures the daughter that her mother cannot be her confidant; thus a mother loses a stronghold on her child's mind; yet, by making it the subject of conversation, speaking of it as an event on which much of the happiness or misery of after-life depends, she might strengthen the reasoning powers against its undue influence, and, while subduing its violence, lead to its being considered in its more holy and sacred bearings.

Geraldine's mother would have almost blushed herself at mentioning a husband to her daughter; yet that daughter could not fail to perceive to what the hint of, "Geraldine, wear your blue and white, and let Esther dress your hair—I want you to look particularly well to-night" tended—for this was done when only one eldest son was expected to "come in and try his new flute." How much of the dignity of truth, with which every British mother ought to be crowned, is sacrificed to those petty arts; how much misery ensured, by domestic duties feebly sustained!

"I hope," said her mother, "I hope and pray you may make a good wife;" and she meant what she said; but she had never adopted the means to make her one.

Geraldine had read over the marriage ceremony, thought for a moment how harsh that word "obey" sounded, then wondered she had thought so—"it would be so easy to obey one she loved as she loved Henry—obedience would be pleasure;" and so she closed the book. Her nature was very timid. She had little strength of either body or mind; but she had much affection, a

gentle yielding temper, and wished to do right in all things. Her husband had settled a handsome independence upon her in case of his death; but the idea of wanting anything while he lived she had put far from her. Although induced by her selfish aunt to promise not to mention her fatal gift, it had never entered into her head that she was doing wrong in keeping a secret from her husband.

Six months had elapsed since Geraldine became the wife of Henry Leeson. She was established in a pretty house at the "West End;" had a chariot of the newest build, a pair of unexceptionable bays, a very tall footman, and a very little page; went sometimes to the opera, presided at a small dinner-party, and assisted at a soirée, with infinite propriety; and so liberally had her husband ministered even to her fancies, that she had only spent five guineas of her store. She had told him of her mother's gift, but remained silent as to her aunt's. Her cousin had come to town to "keep his terms," and her aunt had succeeded her mother as an inmate for a month. "The season," as it is called, had commenced; and if it had not been that her aunt's presence damped her spirits, she would have been as happy as any wife could be. Her husband never was late at his club, and, like most junior partners in a bank, did not remain at his counting-house longer than was absolutely necessary.

One evening, soon after the aunt and her niece had taken their places in front of a private box at Covent Garden—for they did not move in the very high sphere which eschews English theatres altogether—Henry, leaning over his wife's chair, exclaimed, "Why, Geraldine, what a handsome chain! I have not seen it before. Where did you get it?"

"I bought it, love."

"When?"

"Oh! let me see—this week."

"This week! and never consulted me! I hope," he added, looking somewhat serious, "that it is paid for."

"Of course it is, Henry. Why do you ask?"

"Because that chain must have cost twenty-five guineas,

at least; and you know, last week you shook your empty purse at me, and I put only ten guineas into it. Where did you get the money?"

Her aunt contrived to press her foot, as a warning. "I told you mamma gave me ten guineas when I left home."

"But you told me how you spent five of that at Cheltenham. We young bankers understand subtraction."

"Well, then," she replied, colouring with confusion; "if you must know, mamma made me up the money, as I fancied the chain."

Mr. Leeson bit his lip. "Indeed!" he replied; "she is richer than I fancied."

"It does not need a mother to be very rich to give a child ten guineas, even for such a toy as this," she said, flinging the links over her pretty shoulder.

"Certainly not, my dear; but riches are comparative. One person is rich with a pound, another poor with a thousand." He looked serious, even stern for a moment, as if something very unpleasant was presented to his mind; and then his fine animated face brightened up, and he added, "I hope my little Geraldine has not made a private purse!"

She could not reply; she felt agitated, degraded; she had told a falsehood, and one likely to be detected. The performance passed unheeded; she tried to smile, but, instead of smiling, burst into tears. Mr. Leeson had not been long enough married to slight a wife's tears; he withdrew her from the front, and thought he had spoken harshly, when he had only spoken seriously; he caressed and apologised, and every affectionate word he spoke added to her self-reproach. Soon after, her cousin entered the box: his manner was only that of most animated young men, light and careless, with an occasional *empressement*, rendered more striking when contrasted with his ordinary trifling. Still, that manner was the one, of all others, her husband disliked most. Nor had Mrs. Gascoigne's injudicious hint been wanting, to increase the antipathy he had felt towards this well-intentioned but frivolous young man, from the first. Arthur Harewell used a cousin's privilege to the full;

inquired—Henry thought more tenderly than was necessary—after her health, then rallied her on her seriousness, talked the usual quantity of nonsense, which women, who know anything of the world, understand to be matter of course, and then offered some observations on her dress. She complained that the chain had an unsafe clasp, and he offered to take it to the jeweller's to get it repaired—conveying the idea to Henry's mind that he knew where it had been purchased. Mrs. Gascoigne, who hated every one of the Harewells, did not fail to cast in as many inuendoes as she could, to annoy the young barrister, who had too much tact to retort on an elderly rich relative, yet became gradually irritated by his own forbearance. Geraldine was so unhappy as to seem constrained; Henry grew snappish and morose; and the only one of the party who seemed contented with the evening's proceedings was Mrs. Gascoigne. Not that she acknowledged a wish to make any one, particularly her god-child, unhappy; but, like all other discontented people, she did not quite understand why anything in this world should go smoothly forward, and it was consolatory to imagine that others were as uncomfortable as herself. There are persons who derive consolation from the belief that many are more unhappy than themselves. Geraldine was unaccustomed to deception; as long as the five-and-forty guineas had lain dormant in her desk, there was no visible proof of their existence, and she had no temptation to deceive; but the chain coming so palpably before her husband's eyes, had changed altogether the nature of the case, and called her deceptive powers into action. She was, however, a bad actress, and felt so. Her impulses were, however, good.

"I will not," she said, "run a second risk; I will return my aunt her twenty guineas, and not suffer myself to be again tempted: I was fortunate to get off so well last night." She took out the money, and entered her aunt's room.

"You look pale enough," was the morning salutation she received; "and truly, my dear, I am not astonished at it. Mr. Leeson's conduct was very harsh to you last night; and, I confess, I thought rude to me; yes, dear, rude to me—to fly into a

passion about a trumpery chain, because, forsooth, *he* was not consulted—to ask if my niece and god-child had *paid* for what she wore—to inquire *how* she got the money—taunting you with your want of fortune."

"Oh, dear aunt, he never thought of that!"

"Permit me to know best, if you please, Mrs. Leeson. If your mother had done as she ought, she would have stood out for pin-money, and not have left you the degrading task of dunning your husband for every little foolish thing—turning men into *molly-cots*—Ah! you may smile if you like, Geraldine; the phrase is not very elegant, but it is very expressive—you will allow *that*, I suppose. However, you are no child of mine, or I would have managed differently, and taught you differently. Men change, my poor girl; and it is quite right for a woman to provide against that change."

"By a large stock of affection?" inquired Geraldine, half amused, and more than half awakened by her aunt's theory.

"No, my dear; but as large a stock of cash as she can muster. Henry makes you an allowance for house-keeping; you do not spend it *all*, I hope?"

"No, aunt; he has given me credit for good management. I saved nearly five pounds out of my first month's allowance."

"And you told him so?"

"I certainly did. Now, my dear aunt, why do you look so? Where would have been the pleasure of saving without his praise? I saved five pounds, and gave it him."

"And he took it?"

"Yes; of course he did."

"And after that to speak so meanly about the chain! (which, to confess the truth, was a bit of extravagance; but he did not think that)—a pretty clear proof that he expects you to consult him on every inch of ribbon. Don't be a fool, Geraldine. I know the world, and I know that the more you give in, the more you may. Why, you do not expect a *business-man*, such as Mr. Leeson surely is, to suffer you to lay out *his* money for what you may fancy?—he knows how money grows out of money too well for that. No; make up your mind to one of

two courses—either be content to sink into an upper servant, spending your month's allowance upon the house, and giving in your honest account, or do as I did, as other women do—and keep a little for yourself; you do not know how you may want it; and, from the fuss he made last night about that stupid chain—in public, too—I think you may very easily judge that he intends to draw the purse-strings tight; and you looked all the night as penitent as if you had committed a crime. Well, well, you will know better. I once knew a woman who managed to scrape a purse together so cleverly, that, when her husband got into difficulties, she was able to provide all sorts of little comforts for the house, without the knowledge of the creditors."

"But was that honest?" inquired the young wife, "as it was saved out of his means."

"But surely he intended it to have been spent?"

"Yes, very likely," replied Mrs. Leeson, who was musing on her husband's rudeness; "yet such a system destroys mutual confidence."

"My poor foolish child!" retorted her aunt, with an ominous shake of her head, "my poor foolish child! you do not surely believe that your husband tells you everything—makes *you* a confidant! A handsome, would-be fashionable young man make his wife his confidant!—tell her everything! Why, what a fool you must be!—ah, ah!" and the old crackling laugh grated on Geraldine's heart. "By the way," resumed the adviser, "who was with you when you bought that chain?"

"My cousin."

"Oh! and you told Mr. Leeson that, too, I suppose."

"No, I did not; but I would in a moment, for I saw no harm in it."

"Well, my dear, *he would;* he's as jealous as a Turk. I would not wonder if he thought that Arthur Harewell had given you that chain."

"I told him mamma gave me the money."

"Oh! ah! so you did; I daresay he thought her a great fool, for he must know how little she has to spare; however, dear,

there's an end of it now. Take my advice—do not invite Arthur to the house yourself, keep what money you have safely, and add to it whenever you can. You'll find Henry, with all his love, will draw the purse-strings tighter and tighter every year; it's always the way with those business-men: and men of independence are just as bad in the other way, they draw in to meet their own greedy extravagance."

Geraldine was so confounded by the variety of new ideas—the suspicion that she did not possess her husband's confidence; that he insulted her by his jealousy; that, let her be as confiding as she would, she could meet with no return; that he was, or would be, avaricious, not from want, but caprice—all caused her such intense pain, that she retired to her room to find relief in tears, without returning the remainder of her money. If she had preconceived notions upon the subject—if her mind had been decided that, *let her husband's conduct be what it would, her duties, solemnly pledged at the altar, remained the same*, all would have been well. But, poor thing, she had no fixed principles to build on. Her cousin called a couple of hours after, and she did not ask him to dinner. When her husband returned, he found her languid and cold, with an indescribable air of offended dignity; whereas he, on the other hand, felt constrained and afflicted at a duplicity he had discovered for the first time. If *either* had then confided in the other, how much after-misery would have been spared to both!

Mr. Leeson heard from the footman that Mr. Harewell had called, and thought it was odd his wife did not as usual mention his name, with those of two or three other visitors; then he asked her abruptly, "Why she had not detained her cousin Arthur to dinner?"

Her aunt's insinuation as to her husband's jealousy immediately occurred to her, and she stammered and blushed so as to recall vividly the young man's frivolous manner on the preceding evening; and the consequence was, that both felt exceedingly unhappy.

It is not to be wondered at that Mr. Leeson suffered a good deal of anxiety; for it so happened he had discovered that his

wife's mother was exceedingly distressed for money before she had quitted his house to return to her own ; and with a delicacy which deserved increased confidence, he had placed a sum at her disposal as she was leaving London, intreating her not to mention it to Geraldine, lest the shadow of obligation might give her pain. The old lady thanked him with tears of gratitude, confessing that she had wished to borrow a few pounds from her daughter, but thought it better not, lest it might lead to uncomfortable feelings. This proved to him that his beloved wife—she whom he loved with all the passion of a strong, truthful, and fervent affection—she in whose simple purity he trusted, and would have trusted for ever—had deceived him by a mean falsehood. If she had not returned him the five pounds already mentioned, he would again have taxed her with forming a private purse ; but that act argued so strongly against such a supposition, that he rejected the idea for one far more painful—he believed she had either accepted the chain from her cousin, or borrowed the money from him.

Henry Leeson's nature was none of the softest. He entertained the highest possible sense of female honour. Whatever the fact might be, he boasted of always making his affections subject to his reason. And on that same evening, when they were alone, he said, after about twenty minutes had been spent in a restless and painful dialogue, in which neither were explicit, yet both saw that something remained untold—he said, sternly, for the fair and gentle face he looked upon had lost the radiance of truth, "Thus much, Geraldine—thus much ; beware at any attempt to deceive me ; for, if you do so once, you will never do so a second time."

The young wife wept, and wept bitterly; but though only four-and-twenty hours had elapsed since he dried her tears so anxiously, yet then he had not thought, and calculated, and placed one circumstance with another, to see how they tallied ; and he had clung to the hope that she would have frankly told the truth when they were alone—he had pictured her with her pale weeping face, he had framed the gentle counsel, and heard the fond promise ; he had hoped even that she had gone in debt rather than have

incurred an obligation which she feared to confess. Her aunt's extreme niggardliness prevented the supposition that she had bestowed anything upon her save what even misers give—advice. Yet little did he imagine what the nature of that advice would be. Young men in general are careful enough as to what male society their wives mingle with; but they ought to be even more careful as to their female friends. A woman is on her guard amongst men, but amongst women her heart and ears are both open; yet what pernicious notions may she not imbibe from that dangerous class of persons called "women of the world."

It would be difficult to explain how one small suspicion grew out of another; how Geraldine's heart heaved and ached under the consciousness that her husband regarded everything she did with a prejudiced eye, and listened to her words with a jealous ear; how, having asked him for some fancy of hers, when he was in a mood not to grant a favour, he refused; and her aunt, who unfortunately happened to be present, took occasion to exult in the truth of her evil prophecy:—

"You see, Geraldine, I was right; every husband grows selfish sooner or later; and a poor woman who has no spirit is sure to be trampled on – never has a shilling to spend on herself, unless *she manages*."

Geraldine had no broad ideas as to the duties of wedded life. She, happily for herself, had never thought of discussing the rights of women apart from the rights of men. She did not seek to disturb the beautiful harmony of nature, by setting up the weak against the strong—by endeavouring to persuade a woodbine into the ambition of an oak; but she did think sometimes that, as the oak did not afford much generous support to the woodbine, the woodbine might manage a little artificial prop for itself. So she fell, by degrees, into her aunt's plan. She stinted the house to fill her private purse, and so rendered his home anything but comfortable to her husband; but even this was not the worst. She who had felt and mourned over her first untruth with so much real bitterness of spirit, had become accustomed to falsehood; it was necessary to tell one little lie to hide another;

the holy beauty of truth had altogether departed from her. Whenever her conscience reproached her, she whispered to it, "that she could not help it—that if Henry had continued the Henry he was at first, it would have been different—that it was his fault—that he was severe—that he had grown suspicious—that as he often blamed her without a cause, she might as well have a little of her own way as not—that he was frightfully stingy." It was impossible for any one to have proceeded in such a course, without becoming morally degraded; it is wonderful how slowly, yet surely, this degradation progresses; until when a review of the past takes place, we are astonished that what *were principles* should *now* be called *prejudices*, and marvel at our past simplicity! Such were generally Geraldine's reflections. She almost smiled to think how she had blushed and trembled at an equivocation; but such smiles are only as gleams of sunshine on a sepulchre, and when they pass, woe, woe, for the rottenness within!

Arthur Harewell always came to London in term time, and sometimes remained until it had been long over. Henry Leeson would hardly confess to himself that he regarded him with suspicion; and yet, though they frequented the same club, walked together, went to the theatres together, and Arthur was a constant guest at his table, Mr. Leeson was anything but comfortable in his society.

In indulging this feeling, he did his wife great injustice. She loved her husband, and practised no deception towards him, except on the one point; but it would have been next to impossible to convince him of this. She was universally admired; her loveliness was matured into beauty. She was never absent from her husband's thoughts for ten minutes together; and yet he was the only person who appeared indifferent to her.

Her memory was not always true to her falsehood; she often betrayed herself. She had lost her husband's respect. The vase was broken, and though much of the perfume remained, he did not seek to treasure it, but rather desired to have the power of turning from it altogether: each had a separate interest; and

... worth without practice.

The young are apt to learn, ... are generally far keener than ... therefore above all things, nece... present should be only, and alw... mindful of the fact, that in all w... we think, we are influencing the ...

Geraldine had not seen her ... child, as she had been abroad fro... her but too often, for she became ... of her secrets, and still advised he... ever, as, be sure, her child, as she ... things its father would not give it.

Alas! for the mischief that arise... are not always strong of mind; a... weakened or destroyed by the sug... have the example to "warn and sc... corded sin—the sin by which Para... is but one of a train of miseries ... most fruitful source; and in mind, ... as in "good manners," it is certain ... the great "corrupters."

It would be impossible to particu... mistrust that occasioned so many ... and her husband; but they had le... ...en she spoke the truth ...

dissimulation, without its rendering him silent and morose. At last her mother, whom much sickness had made a wiser woman, came to visit them; and so great was the change apparent in both, that she resolved to probe its cause as far as she was able.

PART THE SECOND.

"GERALDINE, how is it," said her mother to Mrs. Leeson—"how is it that you and Henry are so changed in your manner to each other? Four years ago, I left you all affection; now, I find you hardly civil—this is very bad."

"It is," replied her daughter; "but it is not my fault. Henry is perpetually insulting, by asking me the most frivolous questions, and then sneering at my replies. He never believes a word I say. It was only yesterday he took our child on his knee, and read her such a homily on the beauty of truth that she looked at him, poor innocent, in fear and astonishment, without understanding his meaning, and then he looked at me. Oh! mother, I wish I had never married. It is very true what my aunt says—you never can know how a man will turn out."

"Your aunt, my dear, is a very bad counsellor. I fear she has caused mischief between you."

"Oh, no! but she told me how it would be. Why, before we were six months married, he took me to task about a chain! But that is nothing; I assure you he is niggardly in the extreme."

"You must be wrong, Geraldine," said her mother, earnestly; "indeed, you must be wrong. When I left you to go abroad—though I did not tell you so, lest it would make you unhappy—my finances were deplorably reduced. He questioned me upon them with the greatest delicacy; and when he found how I was circumstanced, as he was handing me into the carriage, he slipped a purse containing a hundred guineas into my hand."

Geraldine felt her colour change. "But how did he find that out, in the first instance?" she inquired, after a pause.

"I really do not know," replied her mother; "but you remember, dear, I was always a very bad dissembler. Your aunt says I can be seen through in a moment, which I dare say is the case, and I do not care about it. What does it matter when one has nothing to conceal? I never led him to suppose that you had a penny, or that I had a sixpence beyond my small annuity; so I confessed that when I came to pay you the bridal visit, I had not five pounds in the world."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Geraldine, the falsehood she had framed as to her mother giving her ten pounds towards the purchase of the chain, and the effect it must have had upon her husband's mind, now flashing upon her for the first time. "Oh! mamma, why did you not tell me this before? What must my husband have thought of me?"

"Thought of *you*, my dear?" replied her mother, not understanding her allusion. "Why, what had you to do with it? He knew, as I have told you, perfectly well that you had nothing whatever to do with the matter; but I call it very handsome of him—very handsome indeed." And the lady resumed the perusal of her book, thinking it better to let this anecdote of her son-in-law's generosity operate of itself upon her daughter. Geraldine felt the blood rush to her head, and in another moment

she was chill and trembling. She went to her own room, and traced back circumstance to circumstance. She saw clearly that on that evening she must have appeared guilty of duplicity. She remembered her husband's deep-seated and constant love and affection previous to that event; how her every wish had been anticipated by him. She remembered how pleased, how happy he looked, when she gave him the five pounds she had saved from her housekeeping; and she could not but acknowledge that all the satisfaction she had received from her secret peculations had been gall and wormwood, in comparison to the approving smiles which she now knew how she had at first forfeited. Truly, her tears were many and sincere. She would willingly have retraced her steps had she known how; but she fancied she had not strength to do so. She considered confession more humiliating than deception; and, moreover, Henry's late unkindnesses had been so numerous and so severe, that she forgot, when recalling them, how much was owing to the suspicions she herself had excited.

She resolved to confide to her mother the particulars regarding the chain, hoping she should be able to prevail on her to say, if she was questioned on the subject, that she had borrowed the money to lend her; for, as I have said before, lies yield ample fruitage. She had of late mentioned some of her perplexities to her cousin; and here I pause, to observe that one of the most foolish acts of a young woman's life is the confiding in any man, either what she fears to entrust to her husband, or any complaint against him. The act is almost always sure to betray itself; and if it do not, the step is so imprudent, so likely to lead to results prejudicial to her character, and, certainly, to affect her conduct, that of all things it ought to be the most dreaded —the mos' avoided. It is seldom that a woman, resolved to bear and forbear, cannot succeed in winning her husband's friendship in the end. Where this is really impossible—which I think can only be when a man is thoroughly unprincipled—may God help her! It is wiser for her not to complain of him she has sworn to "love, honour. and obey." Her own sex are often too feeble for friendship; and where there is youth and beauty, men are dangerous friends. It is wiser, then, I repeat, under

such circumstances, for a woman to conceal her sorrows, and to alleviate them by active and duteous employment, rather than by idle and perilous repinings. The very reputation of having a male friend is injurious to a young English wife. It is only a vigorous mind that can bear being thus shut in within itself. A firm and noble one *will* bear it, because it is right; and perhaps, after years of firm endurance, be rewarded by the friendship it has so richly deserved—the friendship of *him* in whom a young heart trusted.

Geraldine loved her cousin really as a sister loves her brother; *but no more.* She had never bestowed upon him an atom of an affection that she needed have blushed to own even to her husband; and though her cousin may be acquitted of all premeditated wrong towards her, he was not averse to being rallied on the preference evinced for him by his lovely relative. He assured every one that "it was a brother and sister regard"—that "it was impossible it could be anything else, as they had been children together"—that "Geraldine was too devoted to her husband to indulge even a friendship for any one—except her cousin." But he did not say these things frankly, and seriously, and boldly, as it becomes a man of high honour to do; he said them with a smile or a shrug, or a *dolce* sort of self-satisfied expression, which made the careless young men of his acquaintance declare him a "lucky fellow," and married men say "that Leeson should look after his wife;" while matrons and old maids began to throw something of significance into their countenances when they observed that "they had met Mrs. Leeson and her handsome cousin in the square;" and some were malicious enough to forget to add that she was accompanied also by her child or a female friend.

Most unhappily, her husband had become so irritable and suspicious, that she excused herself for her constant deceptions. He had long found it impossible to distinguish between her truth and falsehood; he had become unjust to her virtues; for she was a most devoted parent, while he believed that she was indifferent towards her child. When she told the story of the chain—that origin of all the evil—to her mother, the old lady, instead of going at once to her son-in-law, explaining it to him, and showing that the advice of her aunt had caused her to step aside

from the straight path—that it was *she* who had urged her to form a private purse—and by this odious system undermined their mutual confidence; instead of doing this, she set herself to frame a "reason for the lie." And why? Because the little girl was the aunt's god-child, and she solaced herself, by determining that "she would certainly leave her all she had, if she were not displeased; but if Geraldine broke her word—if she forgot that she had promised not to tell—all the previous concealments would have been made in vain, and they would lose the property. Henry would be sure to 'fly out' about it, and what would be the end of it?" The good lady quite forgot that Geraldine had promised to conceal the gift from her, as well as from her husband; but her ideas of right and wrong could all be set aside by interest; we have wonderful tendernesses towards those who break their words for our especial sakes. Geraldine was, in point of fact, incapacitated, in the sight of God, from making the promise her aunt required of her, on the morning of her marriage; because the OATH, so important and so engrossing, which she had taken at the altar, virtually appointed her husband the depositary of her acts, thoughts, and secrets.

How despicable a picture of human nature does this perpetual bowing down to Mammon pourtray! and how vain and insignificant does it appear, when contrasted with so high, so holy a thing as Truth! Oh, if those who are heedless of words and their import, did but know the inestimable value of this "bright ornament"—if they had but traced the cares, and toils, and tangled weariness that *must* follow in the train of falsehood, however small it may appear at first—if they could witness the contempt that follows the liar to a despised grave—if they could see the family disunions, the heart-burnings and heart-breakings, originating in an untruth, no larger than the grain of mustard-seed that became an outspreading tree—if they could be brought to feel the base, mean, paltry cowardice of a lie—how earnestly they would pray to be delivered from its insidious temptation!

Geraldine's mother, I have already said, was exactly one of those who had neither been educated to become a mother, nor in the knowledge to teach the duties of domestic life to her

child. She was, like scores of others, weak, warm, and as brainless as a woman could well be, who went through the etiquettes of life with propriety and exactness. She thought herself acting with extraordinary tact and discretion, when she entered the small library where Mr. Leeson sat by himself, when at home in the evening, and, shutting the door with a peculiarly silent and mysterious air, asked if she might intrude upon him for a few moments. He placed a chair for her, and, laying down his book, prepared to listen.

Henry Leeson was more changed than men usually are in years so few, and yet he dressed better, was quite as handsome, when in society conversed more fluently, many thought more agreeably, for a dash of vinegar curdled the oil, and rendered him pungent and racy. But his features had lost their affectionate, confiding, easy expression; his face had grown sharp as a lawyer's seeking flaws in an indictment; he could not sit for five minutes looking straight forward, but twisted his eyes to see sideways, and his head to look behind—he had grown suspicious.

The old lady had a difficult card to play, and, of course, played it badly, floundering through muddy sentences, until at last she ventured to regret "that her dear Harry had not been in the drawing-room—he used to be so fond of music—and she had prevailed on Geraldine to sing; and Arthur Harewell said he had never heard her in better voice."

Mr. Leeson muttered something about a new book, and Arthur understanding music better than he did, as he heard more of it. And this was answered by an observation, "that more was the pity." And then the gentleman sat, and the lady fidgetted, through a long pause; until, with tears of very sincere grief, she declared, in her own simple way, her regrets that two so much attached as her dear son and daughter "were" (Mr. Leeson shook his head)—"had been," then substituted the sorrowing mother—were now so estranged, "without any cause."

Mr. Leeson stiffly said, "that if there had not been cause, there would have been no estrangement—the fault was none of his."

The old lady hit upon one sensible observation by chance—

"that in quarrels matrimonial, both parties were generally to blame."

He bowed; and answered, "It might be so, in a degree."

"For instance," she continued, "you were very angry with her long ago, I find, about a foolish chain; and really, Harry, dear, you had no reason."

"The chain was in itself as unoffending," he replied, "as trinkets generally are; but I *had* reason. She told me a falsehood as to her means of purchase. The chain was a gift; yet she assured me she bought it. I have but too good reason to remember it, as the commencement of all our misery. Why, she even used *your name* as the giver of part of the purchase-money."

"And so I was," murmured forth the feeble-minded woman, unable to raise her eyes, but keeping down the truth by the weight of her sister's riches.

"Nay," he exclaimed, "how could that be, when you yourself—— But you must remember certain passages which prevent a possibility of that."

"She wished so for the chain," said the old lady, "that I borrowed ten pounds to make up the money."

Mr. Leeson rose from his seat in wrathful indignation, and but that the being before him was a frail aged woman, could not have contained himself. "You really must excuse me for saying I doubt you. I should, indeed, grieve to feel that those grey hairs were dishonoured by a falsehood, to screen a child who has no feeling for herself."

Self-degradation forced itself upon the feeble-minded mother, and she only said that she hoped he "would permit her still further to explain."

"Pardon me," he replied, "if I decline any future conversation upon this subject When I married Geraldine, I imagined I read in the brightness of her sunny face the light of truth. I loved her with the entire fulness of my heart. I would have trusted her with my life; I *had* trusted her with more—for every man when he marries trusts his wife with his honour. I pictured long years of enduring affection; and, above all, in return for the most devoted love that man can feel towards

woman, I asked for her confidence, her *unbroken* confidence. Nothing else could satisfy me. It must be frank—spontaneous—untainted. My conviction is, that UNMINGLED TRUTH *is the sole bond of domestic happiness.* She *knew* that such was my opinion; she had heard me say, a hundred times, that sooner or later, sin follows concealment. I did not want my wife to appeal to me on every occasion, or feel it necessary to render an account of her personal expenses—such details are irksome to a man; but I expected that she should have no interest apart from mine—no expenditure that was to be considered private—no stealing from a house purse, to put into one called, for distinction's sake, 'her own.' Mine was at all times open to her hand. If I urged upon her the investigation of accounts, it was only to lead her to those habits of exactness which are inseparable from sound domestic management. I remember how my heart beat with joy, when she brought me the savings of her early housekeeping: if it had been thousands instead of pounds, I could not have rejoiced more sincerely; it was a proof of frankness on the very point upon which I had depended so much. I felt I had a sweet confiding friend, and that our interests were the same. How soon this changed, I also well remember——" He paused; and then abruptly added, "Why need she have denied that her cousin Arthur gave her that chain?"

"Indeed," exclaimed her mother earnestly—"indeed, indeed, you do her wrong; Arthur never gave it her. If you have for so long a time indulged this injustice, no wonder you have made her and yourself so wretched."

"My dear lady," replied Mr. Leeson, calm even to bitterness, "I *know* he did; and in the gift, or the taking, there was no sin; but there *was* sin in the lie. It destroyed my confidence in her; it implanted the vile weed *suspicion* in my bosom; and ever since, as if a spell were round her, she has heaped duplicity upon duplicity, until now I could not believe truth to be truth coming from her lips." It was most painful to observe the agitation of his feelings speaking in his eloquent face. "I believe," he added—"I hope and trust, she is free of all other sin; I *hope* it; I—I—believe it; but I cannot believe HER. It was only this very

day that I came to the determination of removing our child from an influence which must in the end destroy her, as it has destroyed her mother."

"You are not surely going to be guilty of the cruelty of taking her child from her!" ejaculated its grandmother; "you cannot be in earnest. What will even her friends think? Oh, Henry, you would not brand my child as unfit to be a mother! What would the world say?"

"Madam," he replied, "there is a higher tribunal than *that*, where parents will be called upon to give an account of the children committed to their care. Mine is already practised in deception. If I say one thing, and my wife teaches another, what can be expected but that our child will in turn deceive us both?"

"You are severe—indeed you are," reiterated the poor lady, who had altogether lost sight of her first object in this fresh trouble, and did not seem to understand how much she had added to the evil feeling she had thought to obliterate by her poor subterfuge. Oh! Henry, dear Henry, remember how you loved her!"

"If," answered the afflicted husband—"if I could forget that, I should not suffer as I do."

"Had she been a faithless wife, you could not punish her more severely than you propose to do."

"There are various kinds of infidelity not recognised by law," he replied. "If I believed her guilty in the sense you mean, she should not shelter for a moment here; and yet there are men, who, with less show of cause, have branded their wives. Now, do not agitate yourself on *that* score; I make no charge against her. I believe her pure; but where is the tender faith, the confiding love, THE TRUTH, that should be the woman's THRONE? However, my dream is past—my resolution taken. I will do my best to prevent any man being deceived by my child, as I have been deceived by *her*. You are, perhaps, the most fit person to tell your daughter of my determination. In removing my child, I remove the joy, the light, the solace, of my own existence; but it is for her own good. She shall not return until her principles are fixed, or her mother's course of conduct is entirely changed."

Unfortunately, Mr. Leeson had selected a powerless messenger who, of course, inclined to the other side, and who felt keenly, what even the most silly women feel, the love of offspring. Instead of keeping secret as the grave her son-in-law's intention, with garrulous weakness she sought sympathy from those hundred and one "dear friends," who immediately set their own versions of the story afloat; and while but few saw and understood the father's intention, the mass "conjectured" and "hinted" the "real reason." "Poor Mr. Leeson! how generous of him to overlook what had occurred, and keep *her* (his wife) in his house; no wonder he should remove his child; of course, *her* mother would make the best of it;—people might visit her by and bye, but no one would do so until they saw who called first!—they used to give pleasant dinners and it was a cheerful house to visit at; but most likely it would change—time would tell"—and so forth.

Geraldine looked upon her husband's resolve as an act of wanton tyranny and cruelty. Having ceased to honour the straightforward truth, she could not have faith in the actual motive of his resolve; and, blinded by sorrow and anger, she induced her cousin Arthur to interfere. Women talk and talk, outrage and anger each other, and their words are as nought Who heeds or cares for them after they are spoken? But men's words are uttered to be remembered and acted upon. Mr. Leeson was indignant at any man presuming to interpose in his domestic concerns. Words succeeded each other with angry rapidity, until neither could call to mind how the unfortunate chain was first alluded to. Arthur Harewell, *then*, boldly and fearlessly declared that he never gave it to his cousin; upon which Mr. Leeson gave him the lie direct. The usual consequences followed. Arthur Harewell received a ball in his shoulder, and Mr. Leeson, also wounded, was conveyed home, where his agonised wife, throwing herself on her knees by his side, bitterly lamented that her aunt's gift had been so fatal. Now, indeed, she spoke the truth. The sight of her first and only love, his lacerated arm bleeding, and his features white as a maiden's shroud, recalled her better nature. What, in that hour, did she

care for her aunt's displeasure?—what for the wealth her sordid fingers had grappled together? She believed HE was dying, and dying with the conviction of her utter worthlessness. She did not even seek to extenuate her own fault, while she traced it to its origin; and yet *there*, on her knees, even while pouring out her soul in sincerity and truth, she saw she was not believed.

How could she convince him? In a state bordering on frenzy she wrote to her aunt, imploring her to ratify her words, acknowledging her kindness towards herself, but showing what its effects had been. To this appeal she received no answer. The proof, however, she was able to lay before her husband, at last convinced him that her first fault—her first falsehood - did not originate in herself. Before he rose from his sick-bed—for mental agitation, combined with his wound, terminated in fever—her aunt had died; and the legacy she left her niece was characteristic of her sarcastic nature. "And to my niece, Geraldine Leeson, I give and bequeath, instead of the whole of my property, as I had intended, the sum of one shilling, to buy a padlock for her foolish lips."

I wish I could here say, after the most approved novel fashion, that, so reconciled, Mr. and Mrs. Leeson lived happily together to the end of their days. Not so. A tarnished honour cannot be restored to its original brightness; it is quite impossible for a woman to retake her place in society—even if, strictly speaking, it has not been forfeited—if she is marked, she is doomed. Henry Leeson, though a rigid, was a high-minded and generous man, and with such a character even his erring wife was safe from reproach; but the effect of years of misconduct, of *any* kind, cannot be obliterated by sorrow. Repentance works well for the penitent, but the world is little cognisant thereof. The duel had stamped Geraldine in the eyes of that world as a woman, if not of sin, of levity; this in truth in a married woman is so closely allied to sin, that there is but one Power which can rightly discern the difference. When familiar faces turned aside as she passed, when she walked up the steps of the parish church ungreeted, her husband was by her side, and she felt her arm as closely pressed to his heart as when he supported

her, a lovely, loving bride, from the altar; but even then she felt indebted to his generosity. She knew that his confidence, though she hoped returning, had not returned. When to prove to the world his perfect conviction as to the virtue of his wife, he paraded town leaning upon Arthur Harewell's arm, the knowledge of the necessity for such conduct made her ashamed of her own shadow.

"Take my child from me now, Harry," she said, with bitter, bitter tears, and her head bent almost to his feet, "and I will not complain. Send her where some one of higher and holier mind will strengthen and stablish her in what is right. Send her where the duties of her sex and station will be brought clearly before her eyes, and where there is no danger of her confounding right and wrong. At any sacrifice of my own, I would save her from the sufferings I have inflicted and endured."

This, indeed, was the language of truth, and Henry felt it, and rejoiced; but his joy was sobered by the knowledge, the fearful knowledge, of what the world said, and the dread that she did not yet understand the perfect and entire union of interests necessary to the happiness of domestic life. Union of sympathies is the happy effect of chance, but a union of interests is a positive duty; and so at last Geraldine felt it.

Time passed on. Mr. Leeson, although he despised the feeble mind of his wife's mother, and kept her out of the way of her grandchild, ministered liberally to her necessities. His daughter grew up in mind all that the fondest parent could desire, although her fragile form and sensitive face told of constitutional delicacy. She had much deference for the world's opinion, on all points, and a desire to remain unknown and unnoticed, save by the few she deeply, but earnestly loved. She was singularly feminine in her tastes, and entertained the profoundest love and veneration for her parents. Towards her mother these feelings were blended with a kind of enthusiasm that might be supposed incompatible with her gentle nature; she regarded her as the most perfect of human beings. No mother was ever so devoted as hers—no mother was ever gifted with such accomplishments—no mother blessed with such understanding—if she

wished to express the excellence of any individual, she would say "she is like my mother." Her father had almost forgotten that he had ever doubted his wife's truth. They had removed into a new neighbourhood, and formed new friends. The son of one of these, a man of high rank, was paying his addresses to their daughter; and not only were the young girl's affections engaged, but both parents were delighted at the prospect of her happiness.

Father and son were dining one day at Mr. Leeson's splendid country seat, when the old gentleman, who was chiefly remarkable for extreme propriety. and was so entirely guided by what Mr. This or Mr. That said or thought, as to have no fixed opinion on any subject, although he believed that he not only entertained fixed opinions of his own, but guided the opinions of others, and was moreover exceedingly deaf, said, as they were chatting over dessert, "By the way, Leeson, my cousin, Sir George, was telling me an odd story about a person of your name, no relation, I suppose—eh?" Mr. Leeson did not know. "No; but it could not be—very improper indeed if it was. Leeson is a *general*, I do not mean to say a *common* name, but a general one. Something about an affair that ought to have given employment to the gentlemen of the long robe; but the lady, who was a great story-teller, managed to convince her husband of her innocence, though she convinced nobody else. And only fancy, by Jove! the husband parading St. James's Street arm in-arm with the very cousin he had winged? Now, did you ever hear anything so absurd? How the fellows at the club windows must have laughed!" Poor Mrs. Leeson! After the lapse of years, to hear this at such a moment! She was carried out of the room fainting. An explanation followed, and the match was, at least for a time, broken off. The shock was of too severe a nature to be endured by so gentle and tender minded a girl as Miss Leeson. She had known her mother only as good and pure. She had been more proud of her character and virtue than of anything else in the whole world; but after that fatal dinner she never spoke upon the subject, nor asked a question, until at the very last. Within an hour of her death (and she died within a month), raising herself on her pillow,

while her parents were at either side, she folded her arms round her father's neck, and drawing his ear close to her lips, whispered, "Tell me, father—tell me truth — was *she* guilty?" "No, dearest—God knows, she was not."

The girl's face became radiant with joy, and the last word she spoke was a repetition of the sound she loved so well—"My mother!—my mother!—my mother!" And then she passed away, as the leaves from the summer cistus, as fragile and as fair —the first rough blast of a rough world had borne her to the earth.

For years and years her parents lived, two mourning creatures, he strengthening her, and she, patient and silent, save to the young, whom she counselled, as I do you—dear young friends, who may read this story—that when you wed, do it not lightly; but when done, endeavour, as much as lieth in you, to be of one mind and one interest in all things.

THE CURSE OF PROPERTY.

"POOR Barry!" exclaimed Mr. Newton. "Poor Barry! it was sad to see that once fine property melted away, one could hardly tell how, until even the noble dwelling of his ancestors was sold in lots to a fellow who printed 'Architect' on his card."

"I was his uncle's friend," sighed old Sir Charles Stanley; "and the remembrance of that family—it is strange, but, neve .

theless, true—affords me at once exceeding pain and sincere pleasure. I mourn over the love of display, and the pauperising system, pursued by poor but proud relations, by which that fine estate was utterly ruined; and I grieve for it the more, because it is far from being a singular instance of ruin, effected by similar means. You, my dear friend, will readily believe that the pleasurable reminiscences I experience arise from the noble conduct of that little black-eyed girl, Alice Lee, whom all the family, excepting Claude, the heir-at-law, strove to injure; and to whom even now they grudge the fair name and the fair fame acquired by her own industry and exertions."

"I should like to hear you tell the tale, Sir Charles," replied Mr. Newton. "I have heard portions of the history; but the loss of property consequent upon mismanagement, is unfortunately so common in our poor country, that many such events may have been confused in my memory with this particular one."

"My old friend, Charles Barry," commenced the venerable baronet, "had the misfortune to inherit with his estate the charge of some five or six half-brothers and sisters, who married, and had a greater number of blessings, in the form of children, than usually fall to the lot even of Irish gentry. The person he at that time loved most in the world, was his own sister, a young woman nothing differing from other girls of her age and rank, and who, in due time, married two thousand a year (it was so called) and a fox-hunting 'Squire. Mr. Barry's health had for some months been on the decline, and he resolved to visit Bath, then esteemed the most fashionable and health-giving place on earth.

"A little scene which occured at Barrybrooke the evening before his departure, will best illustrate the *ménage* of an Irish bachelor's house in the year eighty-two. I was staying with him at the time, and we had agreed to travel together. I must, however, tell you, that he had determined upon not letting any of his numerous relatives—who came for 'sea air' to Barrybrooke, with the intention of remaining, some for three, others for nine, and others again for twelve months—know aught of

his movements. In the evening he summoned into his study Jerry Keg—valet by inheritance—and whom I always remember the same stiff, upright, honest-looking fellow, with a grave air, a twinkling eye, and a twisted nose. Jerry entered, his high shoulders propping his ears, his head projecting like that of a tortoise, his hands folded behind his back, his old-fashioned, richly-laced livery sticking out on either side like the fins of a flat-fish.

"'Jerry,' said his master, 'I wish my valise filled with rather a better supply of things than I require when I visit my sister; I wish Black Nell saddled, and as you accompany me, you must take Padreen, I suppose. Have all things ready by six o'clock to-morrow morning, and tell Meg we shall not return for a month.'

"'It's a clane impossibility, yer Honour,' replied Jerry, bowing; 'Black Nell, I heard the groom say, wanted shoes, and I made an oath never to cross Padreen since he flung me into the apple-tree, over the fence. As to the valise, sir, honey! Mrs. Mooney's little Jack cried for it to make a cart for Brau; indeed, it 'ud surprise yer Honour to see the 'cuteness of that child—how he settled it car-fashion behind the dog's tail, and made the natest little harness ye ever see, out o' one of the new traces o' yer Honour's gig.'

"'And how dare you, sir,' said my friend, incensed at this new proof of his not being master in his own house, 'how dare you suffer Mrs. Mooney, or anybody else, to destroy my property in that way?'

"'Sure, she's yer Honour's half-sister, and I hope I know manners too well to contradict a lady; much less one of yer Honour's blood relations.'

"'Well, pack the things in a trunk, and we can all go in the carriage.'

"'O, boo-boo-boo!—the carriage, is it? Sure, yer Honour's own second cousin, Mr. Finnerty, sint that off yesterday, to bring his nurse and the twins here, and his wife along wid 'em, to give ye an agreeable surprise, as he said, seeing yer Honour's so fond o' children; and it's my opinion, that sorra a thrunk in the

house 'ud houid thegether; they've been all let to drop to pieces, because it's so long since they've been wanting.'

"'What am I to do, Stanley?' said my friend, looking at me despairingly.

"'Simply thus,' I replied; 'let us leave our servants to follow, put a few things into my portmanteau—for I promise you, the outward man will need refitting when we arrive at our destination—and I will ride Dorton's horse.'

"This was agreed upon, to Jerry's mortification, who muttered, 'He could ride the mule any way, tho' it was a stubborn devil, and it was no thing for a gintleman of family and fortune, like *his* master, to lave his own place without an *attindant*.'

"'What do you mean to do with the horde at present in possession of the house?' I inquired, laughing. I always tried to laugh him out of his faults, for, like most of his countrymen, he was more proof against *reason* than *ridicule*.

"'What *can* I do with them?' he replied; 'they are my own kith and kin; and as I am the head of the family, and a bachelor—poor creatures!—ay, it is easy for you to laugh—you English folk know nothing, and care less, about long-tailed families; with you, the junior members of a family, both males and females, contribute to their own support; with us—'

"'The senior,' I said, 'is expected to provide for all, and is soon rendered, by that means, incapable of providing for himself. In the name of goodness, my dear fellow, if you must play almoner to such a tribe, do it in a rational way;—pay them so much a year—say ten, twenty, or thirty pounds each—but I defy any income to stand the constant drains to which yours is exposed;—men, women, and children—dogs, horses, and servants—make an eternal inn of your house. My life on't! you never know, from one year's end to another, how many eat at your board.'

"'Meg does—and she is a faithful old creature.'

"'True; but she has so long been accustomed to this Castle-Rackrent system, that it is for you to commence the reform—you cannot expect *her* to do it.'

"'Faith, Charles, you are right,' he replied; 'but you cannot

enter into my feelings. To tell you the simple truth, I could not afford to pay half the people I support ten pounds a year.'

"'Permit me to ask how much their support costs you?'

"'Eh?—Oh! a mere trifle, I suppose: but seriously' (and he fixed his fine blue eyes upon me as he spoke), 'you do not suppose me capable of the meanness of calculating what people eat and drink?'

"'I would only wish you capable of the wisdom of considering whether, in justice to others, you can literally *give* more than you possess.'

"'Justice!—what do you mean?'

"'Forgive me, my dear Barry, but have you paid off any of the embarrassments which hung over the estate when you came of age?'

"'I cannot say I have.'

"'If you have not paid off the principal, I trust the interest has been punctually discharged.'

"'I cannot say that it has. I am never pressed for it; and, somehow or other, the rents slip through my fingers before I have time to think of my debts.'

"'Of course, you investigate the accounts of your agent and steward regularly?'

"Strange beings you Englishmen are! My agent's a glorious fellow—exact as a dial, punctual as a dun. Oh, no! no necessity in the world to look after him; and as to my steward, faith! he's a clever fellow—so ingenious! cannot write much, but has a way of his own of keeping accounts—particular sorts of crosses he makes—amazingly curious, I assure you.'

"I smiled and sighed. Jerry knocked at the door.

"'I want to spake to yer Honour.'

"'Speak out, then, at once.'

"'It's Mr. Maberly, the grazier, called about the three fat bullocks he sold yer Honour last Christmas, to kill for the poor; and if it 'ud be convanient jist to let him have the money now.'

"'Tell him it is *not* convenient, and send him to Dennis; why should he pester me about his dead bullocks? I thought he was paid long ago. There, leave the room!'

" 'The widdy Rooney is below, on account that her son is kilt intirely. and as good as dead, by the Spillogue boys; and she thought, maybe, ye'd help her in her throuble.'

" 'Poor thing!—there, give her that,' tossing a guinea on the table. 'Tell her, I'll commit her son, if he gets into any of these broils again.'

" 'God bless you, sir! I'll tell him not to brile agen—if he can help it.'

" 'What, is he below?'

" 'As much as is left of him, yer Honour;' and away went Jerry. The just creditor, therefore, was dismissed without even an apology—the riotous youth, with a reward! I noted this, and more! I urged his remaining even for a day or two longer, for the purpose of arranging his accounts. It was useless; he laughed me off, and promised that, on his return, he would 'see about it.' Alas! how many of the bright and shining lights of this poor country have been extinguished by PROCRASTINATION!

" His easy manners, his good nature, and really handsome person, made him an universal favourite at Bath; and many a lady of large fortune would readily have bestowed upon him hand and heart: but Charles was no fortune-hunter—he considered the lust of gold

'The last corruption of degenerate man,'

and fixed his affections upon a young and beautiful widow lady with one daughter, whom he had accidentally met at the house of a mutual friend. Although his passion was violent, I saw good reason why it should be lasting. United to feminine loveliness, she possessed the rare endowments of judgment and gentleness: there was a steadiness, a sobriety about her, which made Barry often say, in the words of the poet,

'I have a heart for her that's kind,
A lip for her that smiles;
But if her mind be like the wind,
I'd rather foot it twenty miles.'

" 'She is so uniform,' he would add, 'that I almost think her too good for me, who am so volatile; yet I love her the more for the contrast.'

"It is exceedingly difficult to throw off the trammels that have grown with our growth; and when he was accepted by this interesting woman, he positively wanted courage to write and inform his sister of his intended marriage.

"'Poor thing,' said he to me, one morning, 'she will so grieve at my being married; for she has even now instilled into the mind of her only son, Claude, who is about six years of age, that he is to be sole heir to my property.'

"'If,' I replied, 'she has been absurd enough so to act, she deserves punishment. In addition to supporting the cousin-clan, is it usual for the head of a family to remain in a state of single-blessedness to please his relations?'

"He smiled; but not until after they were united did he communicate his attachment to his sister. He went further;—he wrote to old Meg, to say that, grieved as he might feel, it was necessary that no visitors should remain at Barrybrooke, as Mrs. Barry disliked company. So far, so good; would that he had persevered in a course so decided!

"I could not repeat, if I would, the innumerable mortifications which Mrs. Barry experienced on her visiting Ireland for the first time. The manners and habits of the people ill accorded with her English feelings. From being the admired and beloved of a circle of intellectual and accomplished persons, she found herself shut up in a castellated, dilapidated house, with barefooted housemaids (I speak of what *was* forty years since) and other servants, to whom the English language was totally unknown. Everything, from the kitchens to the attics of the rambling building, wanted arrangement; and she was bewildered where first to commence a reformation. Out of two-and-twenty servants, to discharge ten appeared the most likely mode of getting anything done properly; and this step immediately made her unpopular with the peasantry. Then she blundered dreadfully as to the management of her parties—asked Orangemen and their wives to meet the priest of the parish; and placed the rector's wife, at table, above a lady who was second-cousin to the great Earl of Ormond! These offences were not to be forgiven in a neighbourhood where every circumstance formed an event,

and where, if truth must be told, the women envied her beauty, —the men feared her intellect. Then the family!—how was it to be expected they could pardon Mr. Barry for marrying at all, in the first place, and for not consulting them, in the second? The thing was impossible, and they acted accordingly.

"Harriet, the daughter of Mrs. Barry by her first marriage, was a proud and silent girl, but possessed of exquisite feeling. Her troubles were hard and many; but they were not of long duration: she pined, and wasted, and wept in secret; and at last, as the only way left of escaping from a place where she felt every eye glared suspiciously on her, clandestinely married, and, in less than twelve months afterwards, gave birth to a female child, and died. Mr. Barry, with the pure kindliness of spirit which always characterized his impulses, gave the little orphan into his wife's arms, and, bursting into tears, exclaimed, 'It is your grandchild,—it shall be also mine; I will be unto it a true parent.'

"You know that my friend had not been blessed with children; the feeling, therefore, on his part towards the helpless innocent was but just and natural. The person most displeased, when my little friend Alice Lee took up her abode at Barrybrooke, was Mr. Barry's sister: her son, Claude Barry, as he was always called (his father, by the way, two years after his birth, broke his neck at a steeple-chase), was naturally considered heir to his uncle's property; and it was a grievous thing, in her opinion, for a stranger to take even a small part of the good things she expected her son to possess exclusively. Claude himself was always a good-natured boy, though not much given to reflection.

"'I can't think why you all hate that little child,' he would say; 'she is a merry soul, and gets my uncle out of his nervous fits sooner than any one else, with her innocent prattle: she is quite a comfort in the long winter evenings, when the place is too dull for us to remain there.'

"'Innocent, indeed!' replied one of the family *coterie*, when the observation was finished. 'I wonder how *she* could be *innocent*, tutored as she is by her grandmother.'

"'I am astonished you have not more discernment, Claude, than not to see,' said his mother, 'that the little imp is brought up with mighty high notions: the very last time I was there, she cried because there was no sugar in her bread and milk.'

"'It's a comfort,' kindly added a third, 'that the child is indisputably ugly;—a little bit of a thing, notwithstanding all the cramming she gets, with a monstrous forehead towering over her eyes, making her look as if she had water on the brain.'

"'She's as proud as Lucifer,' chimed in a fourth, 'and would stamp like a fury, if she hadn't a clean frock on twice a day; fine English airs, indeed!'

"'We may all be obliged to her yet, for all that,' said Claude, laughing, and making the remark more from a love of tormenting, than aught else; 'poor thing! I shall be the only one among you, who never thought or said an unkind word of her!'

"'And more fool you!' and 'you'll repent it!' and that always safe and wise saying, 'Time will tell!' was echoed about, through the scandalous council, until poor Claude wished the holidays were over, and he was fairly back at school. The following summer, many of the same party were staying at Barrybrooke; for disagreeable as they certainly were to Mrs. Barry, she bore their society with praiseworthy forbearance: unfortunately, some words had arisen between her and Claude's mother, on a very unimportant matter, and the lady was anxious for an opportunity of mortifying her sister-in-law. Mr. Barry was from home; but after dinner, when the dessert was placed on the table, Mrs. Barry desired the servant to send in Miss Alice, who was then about six years old. The little girl came, as usual, to her grandmamma's knee, and at the moment Claude was helping himself to some currants.

"'Give a few of those to Alice, dear,' said Mrs. Barry.

"'Help yourself first, my darling,' observed his mother; adding, in a bitter under tone, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs.'

"Mrs. Barry rose as she spoke; and I shall never forget the dignity with which she crossed the dining hall, to leave the apartment in which she had suffered so gross an insult:—those who felt justly (I was one of the number) followed Alice perfectly understood what had passed; and the little thing stood where her grandmamma had sat, swelling with rage. Claude heaped the plate with currants and called her affectionately to his side. Alice looked at him with an expression I shall never forget. At last, swallowing her passion, she shook her head, and turning to his mother, said, very quietly,—

"'I am no dog; I am, as you have often called me, a little ugly girl; but the time may come, when those who hate me now, may be glad to pick crumbs from my table, and thank me for them too.'

"This spirited reply, coming from one so young, drew forth many and various observations from the party. Claude was indignant at the cruelty of his parent, and followed his aunt with apologies, and even tears. This was only one incident in a thousand of the dislike evinced to this hapless child, of whose father, I should have told you, nothing had been heard for a considerable period, as he went abroad on the death of his wife. In the meantime, the circumstances of my old friend were far from improving; his habitual neglect of money matters, and his eternal procrastination, were swiftly leading to a ruin, which, as Mrs. Barry was ignorant of its extent, she could not avert. Indeed, the very exactness with which she conducted household matters, was attributed to her as a crime.

"'Where's the use of painting palings for the rain to batter against?' said one;—'such expense, indeed!'

"'Then,' said another, 'there was an enormous bill for building two pig-sties: even if the hastes *did* get into the garden now and then, what grate matter was it? where's the good of [illegible]s?'

[illegible]ouldn't she let the tenants go on as they used,' exclaimed [illegible]h, 'and take the spinning and duty fowls from their [illegible] as others did before her? What was the time of the [illegible] to them? Talk of extravagance! wasn't it the height of

extravagance to pay women for spinning, when it could be done for nothing?'

"Mrs. Barry's system, whatever might have been the prejudice entertained against her by the peasantry, as 'a fine lady from foreign parts, who was come to reign over them,' was productive of so much good to the poor, that they soon regarded her as their best friend, and their gratitude and affection were proportionate, while increasing difficulties pressed hard upon Mr. Barry, and he wanted resolution to tear himself away from family and party feuds. These circumstances soured his temper, and made him at times capricious and severe. It is well known, that at home or abroad, whatever goes wrong with a married man is avenged upon his wife. Perhaps I ought not to say *avenged*, but I can hardly find a term to express the ill-temper which is too often shown at home, when adverse circumstances are encountered out of the domestic circle.

"Your own poet has expressed in language so chaste and beautiful the peculiar feelings which this sort of thing generates, that I will repeat you the lines :—

'A something light as air—a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken,—
Oh! love, that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch, like this, has shaken.'

"'Are they not beautiful?' exclaimed the old gentleman again. "Not that matters were so bad with them either; but certainly, something was fast undermining Mrs. Barry's constitution. I would not have said that her chief happiness arose from the consolation afforded her in the affection of her tenants, had I remembered the devoted tenderness of her grandchild, and the delight she took in attending to her education. The development of the girl's mind was both rapid and powerful. Distant as they were from towns, no aid of masters could be obtained. Mrs. Barry knew enough of music to teach the child its rudiments; and Alice, gifted with a fine ear, and a genuine love for the charming science, made swift progress in the art she

loved. Many studies were resorted to, with a view to occupation, that would not have been thought of under other circumstances, or if the little maid had enjoyed the society of persons of her own age. Her grandfather taught her Latin, and the priest of the parish instructed her in Italian. Of what are usually called children's books, she never possessed any; but could repeat, almost by heart, the Histories of Hume and Rollin, with many of the ancient chronicles. Her light reading varied from the Arabian Nights to the History of the Robber Freny, with odd volumes of Irish History, and now and then a romance of the Radcliffe school. Shakspeare she loved; Milton she revered; but there was ONE book that was invariably perused morning and evening, which laid the foundation of her good conduct and future prosperity. Her grandmother saw that her romantic and rambling mind needed a powerful corrective. Situated as she was, and feeling that the child was debarred from amusements suited to her age and sex,—observing also the avidity with which she obtained information, and unable, from the increasing delicacy of her health, to guide her as she wished, —she wisely felt the necessity of strengthening her religious impressions. The imagination of my young friend readily caught at the *beauties* of Scripture, but her grandmother wished her reason to be convinced of its *truths:* this she happily effected, and the silence and solitude of her sick room often echoed the pure doctrines of salvation, and the breathing prayers dictated by faithful hearts. Barry procured for his wife, at an immense expense, the best medical advice the country afforded. His affection had cooled, but never changed; and the prospect of losing one so dear redoubled his attentions. It was, however, of no avail: and, after a tedious illness, I followed her to her grave. Alice had never left her sick bed: it was a touching sight, to see the expiring effort the pale but still beautiful woman made to place the hand of the weeping child within that of her husband: he fell on his knees, and solemnly swore to protect Alice Lee to the latest hour of his life, and to bestow upon her a handsome income at his death.

"'I do not want that last promise,' she said in a trembling

voice, 'she can make riches for herself. Protect her, but let her be independent.'

"*Independent* was the last word this excellent woman uttered; no wonder then that it was a hallowed feeling and a hallowed sound to the heart and the ear of her grandchild.

"'I WILL be independent,' said the sweet girl, as she strewed the flowers in which her grandmother had delighted, over the silent corpse, and placed to her cheek the blooming roses which she had so loved to cultivate; and then she laid her own head on the same pillow, and read in the Book of Life, of eternity, and heaven, and worlds beyond the grave—and was comforted in her affliction!

"She had watched from her chamber window the slowly pacing funeral pass from the court-yard, the coffin supported by eight of the oldest tenants, who claimed the privilege of carrying it to its resting-place, and Claude Barry, in right of kin and as the representative of his uncle (who was too ill to perform the melancholy duty), following as chief mourner. She had seen the procession, attended by a multitude of people, wind round the hill side, till it was concealed from her view by a dense wood that overshadowed the road, and drying her tears, she entered the dark room where her grandfather was nurturing in secret the bitterness of grief. She seated herself quietly by his side, and made a sign of silence to old Jerry, who had followed her into the apartment, and whose infirmities prevented his attending the funeral: surprised that he motioned her towards the window which looked out upon the avenue, she opened the shutter so as to peep forth and ascertain his meaning. The old porter at the second gate was engaged in evidently a fierce contention with some four or five men, who demanded free passage to the house. Poor Alice trembled all over, for she had heard of writs and executions, as calamities threatened against her grandfather; but as he had 'managed to keep them off' (alas! for such management), she never thought they would really arrive at Barrybrooke. The appearance of the men, the agitation of the servant, and, above all, their suddenly pushing past the porter, while Jerry exclaimed so loud as to startle his

master: 'I'll bar the doors,' confirmed her in the feeling that they were sheriff's officers. And she flung herself on her protector's neck, exclaiming, 'What shall we do?'

"Poor Barry looked for a moment on the men as they wheeled round the house to approach the door. 'I see who they are,' he said in a quiet voice; 'alas! and was not my heart sufficiently broken? and have I already lived to see the time when I return thanks to the Almighty for having taken from me the wife of my bosom—so that she has been spared this misery?'

"He walked to the hall, where his faithful servant, in the true spirit of Irish fidelity, had drawn the bolts, and established himself with a rusty musket, that had done the rooks and magpies much mischief, resolved to protect the dwelling from 'bailiff or sheriff.'

"'Open the door, Jerry,' said my friend.

"'What, yer Honour?'

"'Open the door.'

"'For what, plaze yer Honour, 'ud I do that same?'

"'To admit these men.'

"'Lord bless yer Honour, and keep ye in yer right mind, which ye are not in at this present time, or ye'd niver give way to the like o' them.'

"'Fool,' exclaimed Mr. Barry, as they thundered at the portal, 'do as I command you.'

"'Master, darlint!' replied the poor fellow, 'you may trample on me if ye like, and call me what ye plaze; but I'll never be the manes of letting shame into the house, in the shape o' the law,—only the boys are all at the funeral, it's long till they'd suffer such sarpents to walk the country.—Well, since ye'r determined on it, do it yerself, sir. I niver opened a door to a limb of the law, nor niver will.'

"Jeremiah flung down his musket, and hastily left the hall, while Alice clung closely to her grandfather's arm.

"'Come in, gentlemen, come in,' said he, with a frightful calmness of manner; 'here I am, you see;—be seated, and tell your business.'

"The business was soon told; a writ against his person at the

suit of Benjamin Maberly, *Esquire*, for cattle furnished during a period of sixteen or eighteen years—a sort of running account, with now and then a nominal settlement; bills bearing interest, and sundry other expenses;—this claim alone amounted to the enormous sum of two thousand pounds; for my poor friend had often taken it into his head to stock farms. and speculate in sheep, pigs, and oxen—speculations that always terminated badly, from his unfortunate habit of never attending to his own business, but leaving it to others to manage for him. Another of these men of law had an execution against his goods and effects, for the sum of three thousand pounds, he having bestowed upon a favourite cousin a bond for fifteen hundred pounds, upon his commencing 'professional man;' the interest of this, of course, was never paid nor demanded, but on his refusing to lend the young hopeful some two or three hundred pounds, which he thought proper to require, he placed the affair in an attorney's hands, who urged immediate proceedings on the bond, the interest of which had amounted to a sum equal to the principal. Mr. Barry was very unfit to think or act; but Alice prevailed on the officer who made the arrest, to wait until the arrival of his friends; he proceeded calmly to take an inventory of the furniture; while the master of the mansion seemed perfectly torpid. Claude returned with me and three or four others from the melancholy funeral to the house of mourning. As to poor Claude, he had all the family taste for expenditure, and the property he inherited from his father was mortgaged to its full value. This did not prevent his living in style; he had a good stud, fine dogs, and a machine to drive in that almost broke one's neck to look at; he had given a ball on his coming of age which cost almost as much as the fee-simple of his estate was really worth; and his mother, with her usual wisdom, observed it was of little consequence, considering her son's expectations.

"Claude, therefore, could do little—except join me in bail, which was entered into immediately; in less than an hour after our return, Jerry had the inexpressible satisfaction of banging the hall-door after 'the *sarpints*,' and of drinking (a ceremony by the way, the poor fellow never omitted) 'Destruction to the

law,' in a bumper of pure whisky. I remained at Barrybrooke and endeavoured to unravel the difficulties with which my friend was encompassed. I confess they far exceeded my anticipations. To enter into details would be useless. Suffice it to say, that on his marriage, to pacify his relations, he had granted annuities, which had never been regularly paid, and then had given securities on his property for the various sums that accumulated he knew not how; then, none of the old incumbrances had been paid off; and the fine domain, which could have supported the establishment if properly farmed, was positively nothing more than a common for the neighbours' horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and poultry to revel on. Mrs. Barry had retrenched most considerably the household expenses; but as my friend, Alice Lee, said, 'grandmamma was never suffered to know grandpapa's affairs; and what she saved, even from her own personal comforts, was expended out of doors.' Claude's difficulties were quite as perplexing. The advice I gave to both parties was as follows;—Mr. Barry to sell off as much property as would discharge all pressing demands (for when one creditor comes down on an estate, the rest are sure to follow), to let Barrybrooke, and go abroad for five or six years, live on a small allowance, and thus clear what was spared. Claude we recommended to marry a rich widow, who was known to look favourably on him, and pay off his debts with her fortune, providing an annuity for her from his estate.

"'Cousin Claude,' said Alice, quietly, 'take *my* advice: they say you have fine oratorical talents, go to the bar, and make a fortune for yourself.' It may be easily imagined, that the advice given was not relished by either. Barry's pride revolted at the idea of selling a single acre · and Claude did not like the widow, because he had chosen to fall in love with a girl without either character or fortune. Some accommodation was made with the creditors, and my friend resolved to go abroad. A noble lord offered to take the house, and reside there; but no!—again family pride was up in arms:—and although the certainty that Barrybrooke could not be kept in even decent order, except at great expense, was dwelt upon by his true friends, he disdained

to let it; decided that three old servants should remain to take care of it, and as quickly as possible bade adieu to the halls of his ancestors, leaving the property at nurse for his creditors, and reserving only an income of three hundred a-year for himself. All his relatives objected strongly to his being accompanied by Alice Lee.—'She'll be sure to come round him,' they exclaimed, one and all, 'and if only sixpen'orth of property is left, it's only just that right should have it.' It was all in vain: Barry took a proud, cold leave of his 'dear relations' and 'particular friends;' his spirit had been bitterly wounded by his late misfortunes; but it was by no means subdued.

"'Jerry,' said he, as the poor fellow held open the carriage door, 'see that the widow Murphy has the milk as usual, and the children at the school their clothing at Christmas; the agent will attend to it.' (I must tell you I had used every exertion to prevail on him to appoint a new agent, but in vain,)—and Barry was trying to conquer his emotion, when Alice, her face swollen with weeping, sprang into the carriage. The only living thing she possessed—a pet lamb, attempted to follow her, and looked up bleating in her face. 'Keep it, Jerry,' she said, 'it is all I have to give you, and I give it you as a remembrance.'

"The carriage drove on; at the gate, a concourse of tenantry, and the poor he had so often relieved, awaited him. They stopped the carriage: some of the men, who had grown grey on the estate, came forward. 'We have lived and flourished under yer Honour, and them that's dead and gone, for many years; and ye've never distressed us, nor offered to do it. If yer Honour 'ill stay among us, and keep from foreign parts, we'll make an advance on our rents, and pay up at once to next half-year; don't leave us to the marcy o' strangers, and we'll work for ye, and fight for ye, and never let a writ or a sheriff come near the house.'

"'Och! don't go to lave us,' exclaimed a poor woman, laying her thin hand on the coach-window. 'Oh! don't, agra! Miss, don't let him—and the mistress, God mark her soul to glory! not *could* in her grave yet!' All this was too much for my poor

friend; he could only reply, covering his face with his hands, 'God bless you all! I must go now; but I will return to you in happier times.'

"Mr. Barry proceeded to France: the idea of cheap living is connected, perhaps truly, with the Continent. An Irish gentleman is sure of a kind reception abroad; and the intelligent and cheerful manners of my friend Alice, equally free from English stiffness and French levity, increased the feeling of kindness into esteem. Barry, however, could not long remain contented in the Provinces, and determined on a visit to Paris. This certainly was not wise; but Alice Lee had the happy art of extracting sweets from poison. She was introduced to some persons of literary distinction there, who discovered that her powerful and clear mind was capable of great efforts, and much usefulness. They taught her to soar, and directed her flight with judgment and kindness. Her attempts were made without even the knowledge of her grandfather, who read and approved her first production without having an idea from whose pen it proceeded;—his feelings can be better imagined than described, when he discovered that 'his little cherished child,'—the scorned, the despised one—had not only received, but merited the praise of some of the most celebrated persons in France; he was not slow in sending this intelligence over. I, indeed, heard it with far more pleasure than surprise; but it threw every member of the long-tailed family into utter consternation. 'The thing was impossible—what! the little pug-nosed girl, who had never been to school, to be praised in the newspapers, and thought much of by learned people,—for *her* to write a book, a whole book, who had learned to hold her pen from a village schoolmaster!' Fancy, my dear sir, all the exclamations of vulgar astonishment, and even then you can hardly have an idea of the hubbub the news occasioned.—Happily for Alice, she was not one of those morbid literary ladies, who mourn at their hard fate, and pretend to sorrow because their minds are superior to their neighbours', —who sigh and sentimentalise over their being obliged to appear before the public, and yet use every justifiable and unjustifiable mode of forcing celebrity. Alice was in the purest sense of the

word a Christian, and she felt the necessity of doing her duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call her. She shrank not from the useful exercise of her abilities, and she had good sense enough to perceive that the odium, which at that time, even more than now, attached to literary women, proceeded from the attention they exacted, and the airs of superiority they assumed, in society. She did not neglect the cultivation of simple flowers, because she was skilled in botany; she did not cease to charm by the exercise of her fine melodious voice, because she comprehended the nature of sound; nor did she delight less in the mazes of the dance, because she understood the laws of motion. Though she became an *author*, she had not ceased to be a *woman:* her motives were noble—her actions pure; so that she neither needed, nor wore, a mask:—this was the grand secret of her popularity.

"The creditors of Mr. Barry's estate had lately become clamorous, and declared that the sums stipulated for had not been regularly discharged. My friend found it necessary to go over to Ireland, and settle matters, the derangement of which he could not account for; even his stipend had not lately been remitted, and but for the exertions of Alice Lee, he would have suffered much pecuniary difficulty. He felt that he ought to clear himself from the imputation of connivance where evidently, on the agent's part, mismanagement, if not dishonesty, must have been practised: he came upon the man unexpectedly, and the fellow paled and trembled before him. Conscious and confused, he fixed the next morning for the explanation of his accounts, but that very night set off for America, taking with him a very considerable sum, which he had prevailed on the tenants to advance, in addition to their rents, under the idea of ministering to their landlord's necessities. This was a dreadful blow to my friend's feelings: Alice had suffered much from delicate health, and he would not subject her to the fatigue of a journey; but earnestly did he long for her presence, to support and cheer him. About three weeks after he had quitted Paris on this unfortunate business, Alice Lee received the following letter, sealed with dismal black; the first page was in the hand-

writing of her beloved guardian and relative. She afterwards permitted me to copy it.

"'Barrybrooke, December, 18—.

"'My beloved Child,—I ought not to have written you so gloomy an account; it was sadly selfish of me to disturb your mind when I know how much depends on the work you are now engaged upon. You would gladly support your poor grandfather —would you not? even if he had not an acre left. No account of that villain since he sailed from Cork. Alice, pray for me—pray that my senses may be spared. The ingratitude I meet with, is the scorpion's sting that festers in my heart. Pray for me, Alice Lee! I suppose it must come to a sale. Sell Barrybrooke! And the trees and flowers *she* planted! But I shall have one unfading flower left;—you, Alice! Poor Claude is even worse off than myself. Oh! *the curse of property*, managed as it is in this unhappy country. Would that I had been bred a common tradesman; I should then have been *independent*, and not afraid to look every man I meet in the face, lest he should ask me for money. Do you know that my sternest creditors are those of my own kin? I am sick at heart, my child, and you are not here. Do you remember the evening you left that splendid conversazione at the Count de Leonard's to come home, that you might give me the medicine with your own hand? Yet I would not have you *here* now for the world. Jerry grows young again, and Sir Charles is kind as ever: it is too late to wish now,—but if I had taken his advice,—good night, my child. You are the only being related to me who never gave me cause for anger. Good night—God bless you! to-morrow I will finish my letter.'

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Sir Charles, as he lifted his eyes from the painful record. "When the next sun rose, his spirit had met his God:—his heart was indeed broken. The remainder was written by his old servant.

"'May it plaze ye, Miss, to put up with me to tell ye the sorrowful tidings,—that nixt morning when I wint as usual into his Honor's room, he was clane gone, and as *could* as a

stone; they worried the soul out o' him, that they did; and my curse, and the curse o' the poor, 'ill rest heavy on 'em on the day o' judgment for that same. I wish ye could see how beautiful he looks this minute; jist smilin' in his coffin. So best; for he's beyant trouble now.—God be praised! they couldn't keep his sowl from glory! Poor Master Claude is like one mad, and Sir Charles is forced to order the funeral: it 'ill be the thing to do honour to the name, and a grand berrin' as ever was seen in the country; priests and ministers, and all the heart's-blood o' the gentry—and it's my intintion, now that the dear master's gone, to travel into foreign parts myself, and wait upon you, Miss, who must want some one to look after ye; seeing (no offence, I hope!) that ye are all as one as my own born child; and so keep up yer heart, and God's fresh blessin' be about ye, prays yer humble and faithful servant (till death) to command. —JEREMIAH KEG.'

"Very soon, the estates of the *late* Charles Barry, Esq. were advertised to be sold by the sheriff, for the benefit of the creditors of the said estates. The sorrow of sweet Alice Lee was agonizing to witness or think upon; and even now she has not ceased regretting that she did not accompany her grandfather on his *last* journey. Agitation brought on a nervous fever; and her friends in Paris, for more than a month, dreaded what its final effects might be. She recovered slowly; and one day I was sitting with her in the drawing-room (as I found I could be of no service in Ireland, I went to see her), when the lady she was staying with, endeavouring to divert her mind, observed, with the good-humoured playfulness of her country, that Alice's last work had made a conquest of an old half-Indian gentleman, a Mr. Clifton, an Englishman, she believed, who wished he were young enough to make love to her.

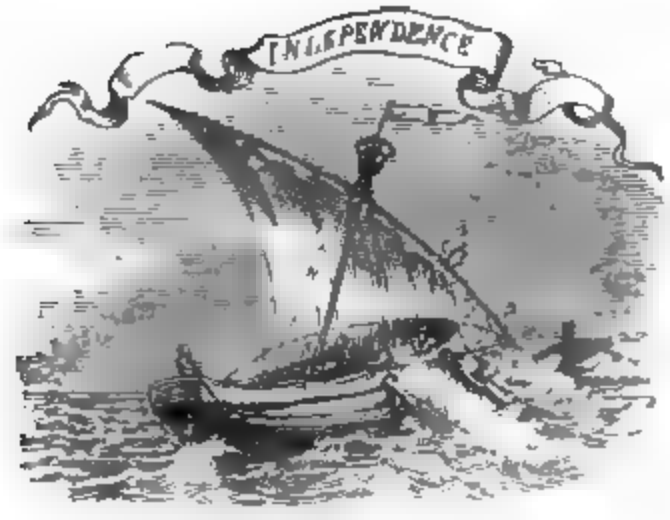
"'Clifton was my dear grandmother's name,' replied Alice; 'and she had a brother once, but he died, I believe.' A vague idea, which I could neither account for nor express, took possession of my mind. The next morning I waited on the old gentleman; and judge of my delight and astonishment when I found, after much investigation, that Mr. Clifton was indeed the brother of

her grandmother, who had gone abroad when his sister was too young to remember aught about him, and who had returned a wifeless and childless man: and the discovery of such a relative was a source of extraordinary happiness to him. He was a proud, stern man, very unlike the parent she had lost; yet he soon proved that he was anxious to bestow upon her what the world calls substantial proofs of his affection. Being the avowed heiress of a rich Indian merchant could add nothing to the lustre of Alice Lee, but it increased her power of doing good. The idea of Barrybrooke being sold rendered her very miserable. Her uncle, who might well be proud of her, when I mentioned her wish to him, caught with avidity at the idea of gratifying her, and agreed to give money for the purpose, just as if he were bestowing upon her a splendid toy. He wished to visit Dublin, and we set out for that once splendid city with many and varied feelings. But I tire you,—a moment more and my tale is ended. We were grieved, on our arrival there, to find that the sale had been hurried forward: by the desire of Alice Lee, I wrote to the sheriff, offering terms for the house, &c. of Barrybrooke. Through some precious mistake, my letter miscarried. We drove down to the estate; and here you must let me mention an instance of the delicacy of my favourite's mind—she would not travel in her uncle's carriage, but only in a post-chaise.

"'It would insult their distress,' she said, 'to go in splendour, when the family of my benefactor is reduced almost to want.' The auction was going on when we drove into the town; we were ten minutes too late, the very house of Barrybrooke had been sold to the architect I spoke of! The kind and generous feelings of my young friend were thus thrown into another channel; she purchased an annuity for 'Cousin Claude,' and to the hour of his death he never knew from whom the income came, that enabled him to live with so much comfort during the five years he survived his uncle. She practised the revenge of a Christian: she did good to those who had despitefully used her. nor were they averse to partake of whatever *crumbs* she chose to bestow."

Mr. Newton looked at his watch:—the kind-hearted, garrulous

old gentleman took the hint, only adding, that the motto adopted by Alice, was INDEPENDENCE,—the device, a little bark passing through a stormy sea, with Hope at the helm, and the haven in view; and adding, "Thank God, all the trials of Alice Lee were endured in youth: her after-age was free from them, save and except those inherent in, and doubtless necessary to, human nature."



LOST BEAUTY.

IN the saloon of a large and antique house, of the Elizabethan era, two ladies were seated, enjoying the cool evening breeze that entered through the open window. The dwelling had been altered and re-altered, to meet the tastes and improvements of the various masters into whose hands it had passed from century to century. Here and there fragments of turrets were propped up by modern

buttresses, the modern and the antique appearing in perfect contrast; one beautiful arch still marked the old entrance-gate. The former strength of the place was intimated by the remains of a moat, now nearly filled with rubbish and portions of broken and mouldering stone, from which the flaunting wall-flower, and various creeping plants, sprung up, and mocked the decay, which —alas, poor blossoms! was soon to render them far more contemptible than that over which they triumphed. The windows of Leslie Abbey—for so was the dwelling called—were of every order, and every size—from the small loopholes to the spacious and modern French casements, that opened upon a lawn of matchless colour and beauty.

Near one of these the ladies were seated: and if we do not longer descant upon the richness and variety of the landscape, the extent of the wood, whose dark girdle of mingled oak and platanas clasped the green meadows, and shadowed the river that wandered and murmured beneath its foliage, it is because we would make acquaintance with that noble-looking woman whose countenance is turned towards the setting sun, and whose every attitude expresses dignity. How firmly, yet how gracefully, her head is raised above her polished shoulders! What richness, yet propriety, in her dress!—the folds of her velvet robe descend to her feet, that—so delicate are their form—hardly indent the crimson cushion with their slight pressure. Her companion is of other, though, it may be, of more winning beauty. The childish golden hair, that clusters over her expansive brow in such redundancy of freedom, harmonizes well with the cheek of palest rose, and a form that, we could imagine, might rest upon a bed of violets without crushing a petal. Her voice is like the breathing of a soft lyre, when awakened by the spirit of joy; her blue eyes are full of hope—that perfectly unsaddened hope which dwells with youth as a companion, and calls innocence its sister.

They are both children of the same parents, though many years had passed before Annette was born, to be the playmate and friend of the stately Lady Leslie.

As they sat together in that chamber, there was a feeling of

quiet and solitude around them which darkened the shadows of Lady Leslie's mind, and sobered the smile on the lip of her gay young sister. They had both recently suffered from that fell disease which has been the bane of so much beauty. But, while Annette had escaped unscathed, the blight had fallen upon her sister, and the mistress of Leslie Abbey arose from her bed with the marks of the pestilence written on her once beautiful countenance too strongly to be ever effaced.

It is not to be denied that the noble lady had as large a portion of personal vanity as usually falls to the lot of woman. Of high birth, and large possessions, she had consequently a sufficient number of flatterers to praise and fawn. Had she been as dark as Erebus, and as deformed as Sin, they would still have sung of and praised her loveliness. But its character and brilliancy had been such that she could not move without receiving the homage of eyes—so rarely paid without being sensibly felt, and duly appreciated. She had been fêted and sung, painted and sculptured, until her exquisite head whirled upon its pedestal, and, what was still worse, her heart, naturally kind and benevolent, became careless of the wants or wishes of her fellow-creatures. Prosperity drives pity from the bosoms of the wealthy: it is good to feel disappointment, and even adversity, at some period of our lives; for practical experience is a benefit to ourselves and others. It was Lady Leslie's beauty that steeled her heart; she thought of it—acted upon it—dreamed of it. It had gained her the affections of the only man she ever loved. One whom wealth and title could not purchase was nevertheless caught by the matchless face—that now!—but she could not bear to think of it. To look upon it a second time, thus scarred and disfigured, was impossible! Her husband had been abroad; and the letter, which lay open on her lap, told of his hopes of an immediate return, and spoke much of anticipated happiness in meeting again (so ran the words) "with his bright and beautiful wife."

Annette had watched, with all the earnestness and anxiety of her affectionate nature, the effect produced by the perusal of that letter upon her sister's mind. She had longed for the

return of her brother; for she felt that now was the time, when Lady Leslie's proud spirit was bowed by mortification, to lead her from the vanity of her ways, and teach her to mount far, far above the world's mean and sordid enjoyments. "Why should such as she," thought Annette, "trifle away the essence and energy of soul, that God has given her, upon those whose wonder is cankered by envy, and to whose lips blessings are unknown! Her heart is touched and softened by affliction; she valued the casket more than the jewel it contained—for she lived among those who could appreciate the first, but not the last; the roses of her cheek were more lovely in her sight than the blossoms of her mind, that would have supplied such glorious fruit, had the one been cultivated with half the care bestowed upon the other. But it is not too late—she is yet in the summer of her days; and who knows that, if Leslie comes not, it may be given to me—to me, her youngest and unworthy sister—to show her better things? When the old Roman soldier was blind, he was led by a stripling boy—as one child would lead another: not that the old man was less wise than he had been; but he wanted sight, and the youth lent him the only faculty he needed. On the same principle, may not I give to her, who is ten times greater than I am, the one quality she needs,—the only one I possess,—and so render her loss a gain?" Having thought so much, Annette looked into Lady Leslie's face; it retained the traces of recent tears, and was more than usually pale. "I will not speak yet," thought her sister; and, without saying a word, she took her lute, and, striking a few wild chords, began that beautiful song of the witty and accomplished Carew:—

"He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires—
As old Time makes these decay
So his flames must waste away."

She paused for a moment, at the conclusion of the first verse, and stole a quiet glance at her companion; but there was no expression that could induce her either to continue or forbear. She again sung:—

"But a smooth and stedfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires:
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes."

"You are fond of the lays of the olden time," said Lady Leslie, with a sigh; "but I care not for either the modern or the ancient rhymesters: why should I care for anything, when nothing cares for me?"

"If you care for nothing, dear sister, that same nothing shows marvellous wisdom in caring for you. I wish I could imitate it! But will you not read me Leslie's letter?" she continued, "or, at least, tell me what he says? Here have I sat, the perfect picture of maidenly patience, singing and sighing, from fair curiosity to know what writes my lordly brother."

"Oh, you may see it all!—but stay, I will read you this passage myself!—

"'Since you have so long enriched the abbey with your presence, I fear I can hardly hope you will continue there after my return. Tell me, dearest, do you not pant for the court, of which your beauty was so bright an ornament?'

"You hear, Annette," continued the proud lady, rising from her seat, and pacing the apartment with the grace of a Mary and the irritation of an Elizabeth—"you hear! Did he know of the evil I have suffered, it would be ill talking of beauty: perhaps he would not think of returning."

"And have you not told him, then?"

"Told him, Annette! Oh, no, silly girl! Do you think I did not want to see him once more—him I have so loved? But your childish nature cannot understand such love: you love linnets, and doves, and wild roses, and——"

"You, sister!"

"Forgive me, Annette, forgive me!" said Lady Leslie, with one of those sudden transitions of temper to which petted men, women, and children, are so often subject; "some allowance would be made for a king who had lost his crown—for a——"

"*You* have not lost your crown. It is now my turn to be

forgiven, for again interrupting you. I have read of a virtuous woman being a crown of glory to her husband; and do you know what I fancy should be a married woman's crown?—Her husband's love."

"Granted; my husband's love was what I prized on earth—more than earth's—all earth's other treasures: it is for him I would be beautiful!"

"My dear sister!"

"What mean ye, girl?" inquired Lady Leslie, with returning haughtiness of manner.

"That you deceive yourself: I grant he was your principal, but not your *only*, object. Admiration was your food—your existence depended on it! If he were not present to give the necessary supply, you took it from other hands. Nay, do not look so sternly on me. I own from him it was *sweeter* than from any; but, sister, it was sweet from all."

Lady Leslie gazed upon her young sister with astonishment. She had only considered her an affectionate, kind girl; she had not sought to penetrate her character—vain people seldom care for others sufficiently to scrutinize their minds. And now, astonishment at her boldness was blended with veneration for her truth. Annette continued—"If my beloved sister would throw open the rich storehouse of her mind, and cultivate the affections of her heart, she would be more beloved than ever by her husband, and command the respect—if, indeed, it would be worth commanding—of those who flattered, and, better still, of those who never soiled their lips by flattery or falsehood."

"Annette Feversham, the philosopher!" exclaimed the lady, contemptuously.

"Annette Feversham, the naturalist, if you will," replied her sister, playfully. "May I tell you a little tale?—it is very short, and very true. You know that when you were engaged in the business of fashionable life, your boy was turned over to his childish aunt, as companions well suited to each other. Well, sister, I have learned from children more wisdom, more of that natural wisdom which comes direct from God, than I ever learned from men. Their goodness is so active, and their thoughts given

with so much honesty! I love to hear them prattle of their miniature hopes and fears, before deceit has taught them mystery or concealment. Do you remember, the first day you ventured to your dressing-room, you ordered Edward to be brought in? I was well long before, and had seen him frequently; but some weeks had elapsed since he had been permitted audience of his mother. Sister, you took him in your arms, kissed his fair brow a thousand times, and wept salt yet sweet tears of joy: they were brighter to my eyes than the gay jewels of your coronet; for they were nature's tears."

"Perhaps they were tears of pride, shed at my own sad change."

"I'll not believe it!—he, too, had suffered the disease, but 'scaped without a blemish. Ah, good my sister! you wept for joy—to see his brow unstained."

"I did!—I did!"

"I knew you did. I took him to his chamber; and, after a grave pause, he looked into my face, and clasping his tiny hands, exclaimed, 'I am so happy that mamma has grown ugly; shall I tell you why, dear aunt?—It has taught her to be kind—she never kissed me so before. Shall I pray to-night that she may continue always ugly?'—Trust me, dear sister, Ned was the true philosopher: he knew that people, though they may be admired for beauty, are never loved for it."

"My poor boy!" said the lady, after a painful pause—"My poor, dear boy—he is a noble child! and I may thank *you* for it, Annette: I trusted him to menials; you saved him from contamination."

"I am not yet *come out*," retorted Miss Feversham, with her own peculiar archness of manner; "when I am I shall have other employments, I dare say, like other young ladies."

"Annette, do not trifle now. My child *might* think those seams of little consequence; but my husband!—then those women—those beauties whom I have so long eclipsed!"

"Ah, there it is! I will not believe it is on Leslie's account you sorrow—he is but one of the many! If I have wronged you by my frankness," she continued, seeing the cloud again gather-

ing on her sister's brow, "study but the arts he loves, and on my knees I'll crave a pardon—and never—never—never any more offend. He loves a country life—he loves simplicity——"

"He ought to have married you."

"Perhaps he would had I been old enough. My glorious sister! if you look so upon me, I'll never jest again. I know not why I jest—a jest is a play on truth—and truth I have ever worshipped. With reverence I speak; it is the earthly type of all things heavenly. God is truth—his word is truth—faith and truth are one—truth should be treasured in our hearts, dwell ever on our lips—brighten our eyes—shed a pure lustre over our features, a lustre that can make beautiful the plainest face. A noble thing is truth!"

"Annette, there's a new spirit created or roused within you."

"Lady, it is not new; love may burn faintly for a time, but it can be quickly fanned by circumstances to a flame. I loved my sister; and when I looked into her mind I saw but one blot there—'twas vanity. I feel that I am touching a dangerous theme, with much too free a hand; but you have called me friend—that is a title dearer far than sister. I've heard you say men are capricious, and would feed on loveliness, like bees, taking honey, returning stings—that they would rove from flower to flower, seeking the sweetest: but Leslie is not one of these. We look upon the plainness of the thing we love till it grows into beauty."

"He could not look on me, Annette," replied Lady Leslie, "without drawing comparisons—what I was, and what I am."

"My dear sister, let me tell you one more short story, and I have done.

"In an eastern country, no matter whether in Persia or Turkey, but somewhere in the East, there was a spring—a limpid spring, whose waters were like crystal; and upon the margin thereof the nymphs and good spirits used to congregate, and return thanks to Allah for having placed so delightful a fountain by the way-side. The holy men who, journeying from country to country, drank of its refreshing waters, declared that it came directly from the centre of the world, and brought to its surface the virtues and

medicaments that before were concealed in the bowels of the earth. The fame of the well spread far and near; and one of the rulers in that country said :—

"'Behold! we will build around our spring—the spring wherewith Allah has blessed our land—a safeguard and a wall; and the wall shall be of alabaster, within and without—so that all who pass by shall marvel at the purity of the well. And we will set one to keep the well, and watch over it; and the name of her who watches and guards the well shall be called TRUTH.'

"And all the wise in that country who heard the words of the venerable ruler declared that they were good. And the ruler stroked his beard, which descended below his girdle. And the ruler said—'Let the thing be done forthwith.'

"But in that land there were more rulers than one; and another opened his mouth and spake. 'The brain in the grey head is dry,' said the youthful ruler; 'and his eye dim, so that he cannot discern the fashions that spread over the earth; his ear is closed against the voice of improvement. Behold! we will tell him a thing! Why should our well, the spring of delight in our wilderness, be closed in alabaster, and one of such exceeding plainness as Truth set to guard its waters? Behold! we will plant a glorious tree beside the well; and its roots shall descend into the earth, and its branches ascend to the first heaven. And the tree shall bear the fruit of gems and jewels, that will sparkle in the sun, and o'ershadow our spring with splendour.' And the young and the foolish shouted the shout of joy. And the shouts of the young, and the shouts of the foolish, were louder than the shouts of the wise. So the young ruler curled his moustache, till its hairs saluted those of his soft hazel eyes, and said, 'The thing shall be done forthwith.'

"And the thing was done—the voice of the foolish prevailed for a time over the voice of the wise.

"'Where is the goodness of the well, and where the purity of the water?' exclaimed those who once had praised its marvel and its beauty; 'behold! the roots of the filthy tree have disturbed its clearness.'

"'My spring—my spring—my limpid spring!' wailed the

voice of the last spirit that had lingered by its side, and could now no longer remain near its margin. 'Birds of no wisdom nest in the branches of the false tree, and the untrue gems have become cankered—and thy waters are corrupt. Oh, that thou hadst been walled with alabaster, and guarded by Truth!'

"And, as the spirit passed sighingly away from the well, the spring itself replied: 'The sun shines, and the gems sparkle on me—what do I desire more?'

"And a great spirit heard the words; and the great spirit said that the words were foolish. And the great spirit resolved that he would uproot the unclean tree, and after a time restore the well.

"And the tree, which was named 'EXTERNAL BEAUTY,' became uprooted, at the command of the great spirit. And the waters of the spring were troubled, and mourned after the tree, and after the gay birds that filled its ear with foolishness.

"But the great spirit said, 'Let be—the well, in a little time, will regain its purity, now that the glare of external beauty is removed from its sight, and the roots of vanity from its heart; it can now drink into its depths the mysteries of heaven, and the light of Allah, and be satisfied with the wall of alabaster as a guard. Oh that so fine a well should have ever become corrupt!'

"My dear sister," persisted the fabulist, seeing that Lady Leslie was not displeased at her invention, "you are the well, and Leslie the wall of alabaster, and I am Truth, and your beauty was the tree; think less of the tree, and more of your husband and child; and, Annette Feversham's word upon it, he will love you better than ever. I will not tell you," she continued, with more tact than those unacquainted with the windings, the knowledge, and the mysteries of woman's heart, would have given her credit for—"I will not remind you that your figure is as perfect as ever—your eyes as brilliant—your teeth as white—your smile as gracious; and, as for those little pits,—they are graves for vanity! Write to your husband, sister—tell him—"

"Lady Leslie started from her seat—and, after a moment's listening, exclaimed—"It is his horse's tramp; I know the sound

of its hoofs among a thousand. Oh, that I could hide this face from him and from the world!" She seized a veil which lay upon the sofa, and would have flung it over her head. But Annette drew up her slight figure with a gesture and a dignity that bore a miniature resemblance to her sister—and, taking the rich lace from the trembling and agitated hands of the lady, said, with both feeling and emphasis :—"There is but one thing that should make a woman veil before her husband, and that is—shame. The house of Feversham knows it not!"

Lady Leslie could hardly help smiling at the tone of authority assumed by the little Annette; but she yielded, nevertheless, and forgot, at the time, in her husband's warm and affectionate greeting, the mortification which, for so many weeks, had steeped her proud heart in bitterness.

* * * * * *

It is again evening—though five years have passed since the commencement of our tale—and on the lawn of Leslie Abbey, the lord and his noble lady are enjoying the prospect and the breeze of their native hills. The moat has been partly filled, and instead of weeds and wildness have sprung up goodly shrubs and smiling flowers. Here a vista has been carefully opened in the wood, and we may see the beautiful river wandering like animated silver beneath the smiles of the rising moon, until it is again swallowed in the darkness of the deep, deep forest.

Hark! the voice of joyous children from a neighbouring village—the shout—the laugh—the gay halloo—dancing amid the echoes of the hills; and we can perceive the spire of the village church—the church which they, the lord and his *once* proud wife, have built and beneficed; the country upon which they look is theirs—the silver river—the dark wood—the waving corn;—what else?—the hearts and blessings of their tenantry!

The Lady Leslie, after many struggles, followed the advice of her young and simple sister: she became literally a crown of glory to her husband, and was crowned in return by his perfect love.

"Where tarries our sister?" he inquired, after they had sur-

veyed their wide domain, and heard the blackbird's last whistle, and watched the fog-wreath encircle the wood, and cast its mantle over the valley.

"She is with our children. O, Leslie! we both owe much to that girl, who blends so astonishingly the wisdom of the serpent with the gentleness of the dove and the frolic of the wild kid. I shall never forget the first lesson she read me on the advantage of personal plainness."

"Personal plainness! what has it to do with you?"

"Peace, peace, dear Leslie! Do not again awaken the vanquished spirit of pride within your wife's bosom; I sometimes fear it only sleeps; yet have I learned to bless 'lost beauty.' My trial has been turned into a triumph."

"Let it sleep on, then," replied the husband, of whose character Annette had rightly judged. "A British woman has something to be far more proud of than personal beauty."

THE WISDOM OF FORETHOUGHT.

PART THE FIRST.

NEAR to, or far from, London—I need not tell you which—is the village of Repton, where the two brothers, John and Charles Adams, originally resided: it is a pretty village to this day; and when John Adams, some five-and-thirty years ago, stood on the top of Repton Hill, and looked down upon the houses—the little church, whose simple gate was flanked by two noble yew-trees,

beneath whose branches he had often sat—the murmuring river in which he had often fished—the cherry orchards, where the ripe fruit hung like balls of coral; when he looked down upon all these dear domestic sights—for so every native of Repton considered them—John Adams might have been supposed to question if he had acted wisely in selling to his brother Charles the share of the well-cultivated farm, which had been equally divided at their father's death. It extended to the left of the spot on which he was standing, almost within a ring fence; the meadows, fresh shorn of their produce, and fragrant with the perfume of new hay—the crops full of promise, and the lazy cattle laving themselves in the standing pond of the abundant farm-yard; in a paddock, set apart for his especial use, was the old blind horse his father had bestrode during the last fifteen years of his life; it leaned its sightless head upon the gate, half upturned, he fancied, towards where he stood. It is wonderful what small things will sometimes stir up the hearts of strong men, ay, and what is still more difficult, even of ambitious men. Yet he did not feel at that moment a regret for the fair acres he had parted with; he was full of the importance which the possession of a considerable sum of money gives a young man, who has been fagging almost unsuccessfully in an arduous profession, and one which requires a certain appearance of prosperity to command success—for John Adams even then placed M.D. after his plain name; yet still, despite the absence of sorrow, and the consciousness of increased power, he continued to look at poor old Ball until his eyes swam in tears.

With the presence of his father, which the sight of the old horse had conjured up, came the remembrance of his peculiarities, his habits, his expressions; and he wondered, as they passed in review before him, how he could ever have thought the dear old man testy or tedious; even his frequent quotations from "Poor Richard" appeared to him, for the first time, the results of common prudence; and his rude but wise rhyme, when, in the joy of his heart, he told his father he had absolutely received five guineas as one fee from an ancient dame who had three middle-aged daughters (he had not, however, acquainted his

father with *that* fact), came more forcibly to his memory than it had ever done to his ear—

> "For want and age save while you may;
> No morning sun shines all the day."

He repeated the last line over and over again, as his father had done; but as his "morning sun" was at that moment shining, it is not matter of astonishment that the remembrance was evanescent, and that it did not make the impression upon him his father had desired *long* before.

A young, unmarried, handsome physician, with about three thousand pounds in his pocket, and "good expectations," might be excused for building "des châteaux en Espagne." A very wise old lady said once to me, "Those who have none on earth may be forgiven for building them in the air; but those who have them on earth should be content therewith." Not so, however, was John Adams; he built and built, and then by degrees descended to the realities of his position. What power would not that three thousand pounds give him! He wondered if Dr. Lee would turn his back upon him now, when they met in consultation; Mr. Chubb, the country apothecary, would not, he was sure, laugh, and ask him if he could read his own prescriptions! Then he recurred to a dream—for it was so vague at that time as to be little more—whether it would not be better to abandon altogether country practice, and establish himself in the metropolis—LONDON. A thousand pounds, advantageously spent, with a few introductions, would do a great deal in London, and that was but a third of what he had. And this great idea banished all remembrance of the past, all sense of the present—the young aspirant thought only of the future.

* * * * * *

Five years have passed. Dr. John Adams was "settled" in a small "showy" house in the vicinity of Mayfair; he had, the world said, made an excellent match. He married a very pretty girl, "highly connected," and was considered to be possessed of personal property, because, for so young a physician, Dr. Adams lived in a "superior style." His brother Charles was still residing in the old farm-house, to which, beyond the mere keep-

ing it in repair, he had done but little, except, indeed, adding a wife to his establishment—a very gentle, loving, yet industrious girl, whose dower was too small to have been her only attraction. Thus both brothers might be said to be fairly launched in life.

It might be imagined that Charles Adams, having determined to reside in his native village, and remain, what his father and grandfather had been, a simple gentleman farmer, and that rather on a small than a large scale, was altogether without the feeling of ambition which stimulates exertion and elevates the mind. Charles Adams had quite enough of this—which may be said, like fire, to be "a good servant, but a bad master"—but he made it subservient to the dictates of prudence—and a forethought, the gift, perhaps, that, above all others, we should most earnestly covet for those whose prosperity we would secure. To save his brother's portion of the freehold from going into the hands of strangers, he incurred a debt; and wisely—while he gave to his land all that was necessary to make it yield its increase—he abridged all other expenses, and was ably seconded in this by his wife, who *resolved*, until principal and interest were discharged, to live quietly and carefully. Charles contended that every appearance made beyond a man's means was an attempted fraud upon the public; while John shook his head, and answered that it might do very well for Charles to say so, as no one expected the sack that brought the grain to market to be of fine holland, but that no man in a profession could get on in London without making "an appearance." At this Charles shrugged his shoulders, and thanked God he lived at Repton.

The brothers, as years moved rapidly on—engaged as they were by their mutual industry and success in their several fields of action—met but seldom. It was impossible to say which of the two continued the most prosperous. Dr. Adams made several lucky hits; and having so obtained a position, was fortunate in securing an abundance of patients in an intermediate sort of state—that is, neither very well nor very ill. Of a really bland and courteous nature, he was kind and attentive to all,

and it was certain that such of his patients as were only in moderate circumstances, got well long before those who were rich; his friends attributed this to his humanity as much as to his skill; his enemies said he did not like "poor patients." Perhaps there was a mingling of truth in both statements. The money he had received for his portion of the land was spent, certainly, before his receipts equalled his expenditure; and strangely enough, by the time the farmer had paid off his debt, the doctor was involved, not to a large amount, but enough to render his "appearance" to a certain degree fictitious. This embarrassment, to do him justice, was not of long continuance; he became the fashion; and before prosperity had turned his head by an influx of wealth, so as to render him careless, he got rid of his debt, and then his wife agreed with him "that they might live as they pleased."

It so happened that Charles Adams was present when this observation was made, and it spoke well for both the brothers that their different positions in society had not in the smallest degree cooled their boyhood's affection; not even the money transactions of former times, which so frequently create disunion, had changed them: they met less frequently, but they always met with pleasure, and separated with regret.

"Well!" exclaimed the doctor, triumphantly, as he glanced around his splendid rooms, and threw himself into a *chaise longue* — then a new luxury—"well, it is certainly a charming feeling to be entirely out of debt!"

"And yet," said his wife, "it would not be wise to confess it in our circle."

"Why?" inquired Charles.

"Because it would prove that we had been in it," said the lady.

"At all events," said John, "now I shall not have to reproach myself with every extra expense, and think I ought to pay my debts first: now I may live exactly as I please."

"I do not think so," said Charles.

"Not think so!" repeated Mrs. Adams, in a tone of astonishment.

"Not think so!" exclaimed John; "do I not make the money myself?"

"Granted, my dear fellow!—to be sure you do," said Charles.

"Then why should I not spend it as pleases me best? Is there any reason why I should not?"

As if to give the strongest dramatic effect to Charles's opinion, the nurse at that moment opened the drawing-room door, and four little laughing children rushed into the room.

"There—are four reasons against your spending your income exactly as you please; unless, indeed, part of your plan be to provide for them," answered Charles, very seriously.

"I am sure," observed Mrs. Adams, with the half-offended air of a weak woman when she hears the truth, "John need not be told his duty to his children; he has always been a most affectionate father."

"A father may be fond and foolish," said Charles, who was peculiarly English in his mode of giving an opinion. "For my part, I could not kiss my little Mary and Anne, when I go to bed at night, if I did not feel I had already formed an accumulating fund for their future support—a support they will need all the more when their parents are taken from them, as they must be, in due course of time."

"They must marry," said Mrs. Adams.

"That is a chance," replied Charles; "women hang on hands now-a-days. At all events, by God's blessing, I am resolved that, if they are beauties, they shall never be forced by poverty to accept unworthy matches; if they are plain, they shall have enough to live upon without husbands."

"That is easy enough for you, Charles," said the doctor, "who have had your broad acres to support you, and no necessity for expenditure or show of any kind—who might go from Monday morning till Saturday night in home-spun, and never give anything beyond home-brewed and gooseberry-wine, with a chance bottle of port to your visitors; while I, Heaven help me! was obliged to dash in a well-appointed equipage, entertain, and appear to be doing a great deal in my profession, when a guinea would pine in solitude for a week together in my pocket."

"I do not want to talk with you of the past, John," said Charles; "our ideas are more likely to agree now than they were ten or twelve years ago: I will speak of the future and present. You are now out of debt, in the very prime of life, and in the receipt of a splendid income; but do not, let me entreat you, spend it as it comes: lay by something for those children; provide for them, either by insurance or some of the many means that are open to us all. Do not, my dear brother, be betrayed by health, or temptation for display, to live up to an income the nature of which is so essentially precarious."

"Really," murmured Mrs. Adams, "you put one into very low spirits."

Charles remained silent, waiting his brother's reply.

"My dear Charles," he said, at last, "there is a great deal of truth in what you say—certainly, a great deal; but I cannot change my style of living, strange as it may seem. If I did, I should lose my practice. And then I must educate my children—*that* is an imperative duty, is it not?"

"Certainly it is; it is a *part* of the provision I have spoken of, but not the whole—a portion only. If you have the means to do both, it is your duty to do both; and you *have* the means. Nay, my dear sister, do not seem angry or annoyed with me; it is for the sake of your children I speak; it is to prevent their ever knowing practically what we do know theoretically—that the world is a hard world—hard and unfeeling to those who need its aid; it is to prevent the possibility of their experiencing *a reverse*."

Mrs. Adams burst into tears, and walked out of the room. Charles was convinced that *she* would not uphold his opinion.

"Certainly," said John, "I intend to provide for my children; but *there is no hurry*, and——"

"There should be no hesitation in the case," interrupted Charles; "every man *intends* to provide for his children. God forbid that I should imagine any man to be sufficiently wicked to say,—'I have been the means of bringing this child into existence—I have brought it up in the indulgence of all the luxuries with which I indulged myself—and now I intend to

withdraw them all from it, and leave it to fight its own way through the world.' No man could look on the face of the innocent child nestling in your bosom and say *that;* but if you do not appropriate a portion of the means you possess to save that child from the 'hereafter,' you act as if you had resolved so to cast it on the wild waters of a turbulent world."

"But, Charles, I intend to do all that you counsel. No wonder poor Lucy could not bear these words, when I, your own and only brother, find them stern and reproachful; no wonder that such should be the case. Of course, I *intend* to provide for my children."

"Then DO IT," said Charles.

"Why, so I will, but cannot in a moment. I have already said there is no hurry. You must give a little time."

"The time may come, my dear John, when TIME will give you no time. You have been spending over and above your debt—more than, as the father of four children, you have any right to spend. The duty parents owe their children in this respect has preyed more strongly on my mind than usual, as I have been called on lately to witness its effects—to see its misery. One family at Repton, a family of eight children, has been left entirely without provision, by a man who enjoyed a situation of five hundred a-year in quarterly payments."

"That man is, however, guiltless. What could he save out of five hundred a-year? How could he live on less?" replied the doctor.

"Live upon four, and insure his life for the benefit of those children. Nay," continued Charles, in the vehemence of his feelings, "the man who does not provide means of existence for his helpless children, until they are able to provide for themselves, cannot be called a reasonable person; and the legislature ought to oblige such to contribute to a fund to prevent the spread of the worst sort of pauperism—that which comes upon well-born children from the carelessness or selfishness of their parents. God, in his wisdom, and certainly in his mercy, removed the poor broken-hearted widow of the person I allude to, a month after his death; and the infant, whose nourishment

from its birth had been mingled with bitterness, followed in a few days. I saw myself seven children crowd round the coffin that was provided by charity; I saw three taken to the workhouse, and the elder four distributed amongst kind-hearted hard-working people, who are trying to inure the young soft hands, accustomed to silken idleness, to the toils of homely industry. I ask you, John Adams, how the husband of that woman, the father of those children, can meet his God, when it is required of him to give an account of his stewardship?"

"It is very true—very shocking, indeed," observed Dr. Adams. "I certainly will do something to secure my wife and children from the possibility of anything like *that*, although, whatever were to happen to me, I am sure Lucy's family would prevent——"

Charles broke in upon the sentence his brother found it difficult to complete—"And can you expect distant or even near relatives to perform what you, whose duty it is, neglect? Or would you leave those dear ones to the bitterness of dependence, when, by the sacrifice or curtailment of those luxurious habits which, if not closely watched, increase in number, and at last become necessaries, you could leave them in comfort and independence? We all hope for the leisure of a death-bed—awful enough, come as it may—awful, even when beyond its gloom we see the risen Sun of Righteousness in all His glory—awful, though our faith be strong in Him who is our strength; but if the consciousness of having neglected those duties which we were sent on earth to perform be with us, then dark, indeed, will be the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I do not want, however, to read a homily, my dear brother, but to impress a truth; and I do hope that you will prevent the possibility of these dear children feeling what they must feel, enduring what they must endure, if *you* passed into another world without performing your duty towards them, and through them to society, in this."

Mrs. Adams met her brother-in-law that day (people five-and-twenty years ago did dine by day) at dinner, with an air of offence. She was, of course, lady-like and quiet, but it was evident she was displeased. Everything at table was perfect

according to its kind. There was no guest present who was not superior in wealth and position to the doctor himself, and each was quite aware of the fact. Those who climb boldly sometimes take a false step, but at all times make dangerous ones. When Charles looked round upon the splendid plate and stylish servants—when the children were ushered in after dinner, and every tongue was loud in praises of their beauty—an involuntary shudder passed through his heart, and he almost accused himself of selfishness, when he was comforted by the remembrance of the provision made for his own little ones, who were as pretty, as well educated, and as happy in their cheerful country home.

The next morning he was on his return to Repton, happy in the assurance his brother had given him before they parted, that he would really lay by a large sum for the regular insurance of his life.

"My dear John," said the doctor's wife, "when does the new carriage come home? I thought we were to have had it this week. The old chariot looked so dull to-day, just as you were going out, when Dr. Fitzlane's new chocolate colour passed · certainly that chocolate coloured carriage picked out with blue, and those blue liveries are very, very pretty."

"Well, Lucy, I think them too gay—the liveries I mean—for an M.D.; quieter colours do best; and as to the new carriage, I had not absolutely ordered it. I don't see why I cannot go on with the jobs; and I almost think I shall do so, and appropriate the money I intended for *my own* carriage to another purpose."

"What purpose?"

"Why, to effect an insurance on my life. There was a great deal of truth in what Charles said the other day, although he said it coarsely, which is not usual with him; but he felt the subject, and I feel it also; so I think of, as I said, going quietly on with the jobs—at all events till next year—and devoting this money to the insurance."

It is difficult to believe how any woman, situated as Mrs. Adams was, could have objected to a plan so evidently for her advantage and the advantage of her family; but she was one of those who never like to think of the possibility of a reverse of

fortune who thrust care off as long as they can, and who feel more pleasure in being lavish as to the present, than in saving for the future.

"I am sure," she answered, in the half-petted, half-peevish tone that evinces a weak mind, "I am sure if anything was to happen to you, I should break my heart at once, and my family, of course, would provide for the children. I could not bear the idea of reaping any advantage by your death; and really the jobs are so very inferior to what they used to be—and Dr. Leeswor, next door but one, has purchased such a handsome chariot—you have at least twice his practice; and ——. Why, dear John, you never were in such health; there will be no necessity for this painful insurance. And after you have set up your *own* carriage, you can begin and lay by, and in a few years there will be plenty for the children; and I shall not have the galling feeling that any living thing would profit by your death. Dear John, pray do not think of this painful insurance; it may do very well for a man like your brother—a man without refinement; but just fancy the mental torture of such a provision."

Much more Mrs. Adams talked; and the doctor, who loved display, and had no desire to see Dr. Leeswor, his particular rival, or even Dr. Fitzlane, better appointed than himself, felt strongly inclined towards the new carriage, and thought it would certainly be pleasanter to save than to insure, and resolved to begin immediately *after* the purchase of his new equipage.

When persons are very prosperous, a few ten or twenty pounds do not much signify; but the principle of careless expenditure is hard to curb.

Various things occurred to put off the doctor's plan of laying by. Mrs. Adams had an illness, that rendered a residence abroad necessary for a winter or two. The eldest boy must go to Eton. As their mamma was not at home, the little girls were sent to school. Bad as her management was, it was better than no management at all. If the doctor had given up his entertainments, his "friends" would have said he was going down in the world, and his patients would have imagined him less skilful; besides, notwithstanding his increased expenditure, he found he

had ample means, not to lay by, but to spend on without debt or difficulty. Sometimes his promise to his brother would cross his mind, but it was soon dispelled by what he had led himself to believe was the impossibility of attending to it then. In process of time two little ones were added to the four, and still his means kept pace with his expenses; in short, for ten years he was a favourite with the class of persons who render favouritism fortune. It is impossible, within the compass of a tale, to trace the minutiæ of the brothers' history; the children of both were handsome, intelligent, and, in the world's opinion, well educated. John's eldest daughter was one amongst a thousand for beauty of mind and person; hers was no glaring display of figure or information. She was gentle, tender, and affectionate; of a disposition sensitive, and attuned to all those rare virtues in her sphere, which form at once the treasures of domestic life and the ornaments of society. She it was who soothed the nervous irritability of her mother's sick chamber and perpetual peevishness, and graced her father's drawing-room by a presence that was attractive to both old and young, from its sweetness and unpretending modesty; her two younger sisters called forth all her tenderness, from the extreme delicacy of their health; but her brothers were even greater objects of solicitude—handsome, spirited lads—the eldest waiting for a situation, promised, but not given; the second also waiting for a cadetship; while the youngest was still at Eton. The moment his eldest sons got the appointments they were promised, Dr. Adams would certainly save, or insure, or do something!

People who only *talk* about doing "something," generally end by doing "nothing." Another year passed; Mrs. Adams was still an invalid, the younger girls more delicate than ever, the boys waiting, as before, their promised appointments, and more extravagant than ever; and Miss Adams had made a conquest which even her father thought worthy of her.

The gentleman who had become really attached to this beautiful girl was of a high family, who were sufficiently charmed with the object of his affections to give their full sanction, as far as person and position were concerned; but the prudent father

of the would-be bridegroom thought it right to take an early opportunity of waiting upon the doctor, stating his son's prospects, and frankly asking what sum Dr. Adams proposed settling on his daughter. Great, indeed, was his astonishment at the reply—"He should not be able to give his daughter anything *immediately*, but at his death." The doctor, for the first time for many years, felt the bitterness of his *false position.* He hesitated, degraded by the knowledge that he must sink in the opinion of the man of the world by whom he was addressed; he was irritated at his want of available funds being known; and though well aware that the affections of his darling child were bound up in the son of the very gentlemanly but most prudent person who sat before him, he was so high and irritable in his bearing, that the fathers parted, not in anger, but in anything but good feeling.

Sir Augustus Barry was not slow to set before his son the disadvantages of a union, where the extravagant habits of Miss Adams had no more stable support than her father's life. And Dr. Adams insulted the son for the fault of the father, and forbade his daughter to receive him.

Mary Adams endeavoured to bear this as meekly as she had borne the flattery and the tenderness which had been lavished on her since her birth. The bitter, bitter knowledge that she was considered by her lover's family as a girl who, with the chance of being penniless, lived like a princess, was inconceivably galling; and though she had dismissed her lover, and knew that her father had insulted him, still she wondered how he could so soon forget her, and never write even a line of farewell. From her mother she did not expect sympathy; she was too tender and too proud to seek it; and her father, more occupied than ever, was seldom in his own house. Her uncle, who had not been in town for some years, at last arrived, and was not less struck by the extreme grace and beauty of his niece, than by the deep melancholy which saddened her voice, and weighed down her spirits. He was evidently anxious to mention something which made him joyous and happy; and when thed octor entered the library with him, he said, "And may not Mary come in also?" Mary

did come in; and her gentle presence subdued her uncle's spirits. "I had meant to tell the intended change in my family only to you, brother John; but it has occurred to me we were all wrong about my niece; they said at home, 'Do not invite my cousin, she is too fine, too gay to come to a country wedding; she would not like it;' but I think, surrounded as she is by luxuries, that the fresh air of Repton, the fresh flowers, fresh fields, and fresh smiles of her cousins would do my niece good, great good, and we shall be quite gay in our own homely way—the gaiety that upsprings from hearts grateful to the Almighty for his goodness. The fact is, that in about three weeks *my* Mary is to be married to our rector's eldest son! In three weeks. As he is only his father's curate, they could not have afforded to marry for five or six years, if I had not been able to tell down a handsome sum for Mary's fortune; it was a proud thing to be able to make a good child happy by care in time. 'Care in time,' that's my stronghold! How glad we were to look back and think, that while we educated them properly, we denied ourselves, to perform our duty to the children God had given to our care. We have not been as *gay* as our neighbours, whose means were less than ours; we could not be so, seeing we had to provide for five children; but our pleasure has been to elevate and render those children happy and prosperous. Mary will be so happy, dear child—so happy! Only think, John, she will be six years the sooner happy from our *care in time!*" This was more than his niece could bear. The good father was so full of his daughter's happiness, and the doctor so overwhelmed with self-reproach—never felt so bitterly as at that moment—that neither perceived the death-like paleness that overspread the less fortunate Mary's face. She got up to leave the room, staggered, and fell at her father's feet.

"We have murdered her between us," muttered Dr. Adams, while he raised her up; "murdered her; but *I* struck the first blow. God forgive me! God forgive me!"

That night the brothers spent in deep and earnest converse. The certainty of his own prosperity, the self-gratulation that follows a just and careful discharge of duties imposed alike by

reason and religion, had not raised Charles above his brother in his own esteem. Pained beyond description at the suffering he had so unconsciously inflicted on his niece—horror-struck at the fact, that thousands upon thousands had been lavished, yet nothing done for hereafter, the hereafter that *must* come, he urged upon John the danger of delay, the uncertainty of life. Circumstances increased his influence. Dr. Adams had been made painfully aware that gilding was not gold. The beauty, position, and talents of his beloved child, although fully acknowledged, had failed to establish her in life. "Look, Charles," he said, after imparting all to his brother, absolutely weeping over the state of uncomplaining but deep sorrow to which his child was reduced; "if I could command the necessary sum, I would to-morrow insure my life for a sum that would place them beyond the possible reach of necessity of any kind."

"Do not wait for that," was the generous reply of Charles Adams; "I have some unemployed hundreds at this moment. Come with me to-morrow; do not delay a day, no, nor an hour; and take my word for it you will have reason to bless your resolve. Only imagine what would be the case if God called you to give an account of your stewardship." But he checked himself; he saw that more was not necessary; and the brothers separated for a few hours, both anxious for the morning. It was impossible to say which of the two hurried over breakfast with the greatest rapidity. The carriage was at the door; and Dr. Adams left word with his butler that he was gone into the city on urgent business, and would be back in two hours.

"I don't think," exclaimed Charles, rubbing his hands gleefully, "I don't think, that if my dear niece were happy, I should ever have been so happy in all my life as I am at this moment."

"I feel already," replied John, "as if a great weight were removed from my heart; and were it not for the debt which I have contracted to you—— Ah, Charles, I little dreamt when I looked down from the hill over Repton, and thought my store inexhaustible, that I should be obliged to you thus late in life. And yet I protest I hardly know where I could have drawn in;

one expense grows so out of another. These boys have been so very extravagant; but I shall soon have the two eldest off; they cannot keep them much longer waiting."

"Work is better than waiting; but let the lads fight their way; they have had, I suppose, a good education; they ought to have had professions There is something to me awfully lazy in your 'appointments;' a young man of spirit will appoint himself; but it is the females of a family, brought up as yours have been, who are to be considered. Women's position in society is changed from what it was some years ago; it was expected that they must marry; and so they were left, before their marriage, dependent upon fathers and brothers, as creatures that could do nothing for themselves. Now, poor things, I really don't know why, but girls do not marry off as they used. They become old. and frequently—owing to the expectation of their settling—without the provision necessary for a comfortable old age. This is the parent of those despicable tricks and arts which women resort to to get married, as they have no acknowledged position independent of matrimony. Something ought to be done to prevent this. And when the country steadies a little from the great revolution of past years, I suppose something may be thought of by improved teaching and systems—to enable women to assist themselves, and be recompensed for the assistance they yield others. Now, imagine your dear girls, those younger ones particularly, deprived of you"——

"Here is the patient upon whom I must call, *en route*," interrupted the doctor.

The carriage drew up.

"I wish," said Charles, "you had called here on your return, I wanted the insurance to have been your first business to-day."

"I shall not be five minutes," was the reply. The servant let down the step, and the doctor bounded up towards the open door. In his progress he trod upon a bit, a mere shred, of orange peel; it was the mischief of a moment; he slipped, and his temple struck against the sharp column of an iron-scraper. Within one hour, Dr. John Adams had ceased to exist.

What the mental and bodily agony of that one hour was, you can better understand than I can describe. He was fully conscious that he was dying—and he knew all the misery that was to follow.

PART THE SECOND.

"ONLY give me your attention, my dear niece," said Charles Adams, as he seated himself by Mary's side; "for half-an-hour, now that all is over, and that the demands of the world press upon us. I wish to speak about the future. Your mother bursts into such fits of despair that I can do nothing with her; and your brother is so ungovernable—talks as if he could command the Bank of England, and is so full of his mother's connexions and their influence, that I have left him to himself. Can you, my dear Mary, restrain your feelings, and give me your attention?"

Mary Adams looked firmly in her uncle's face, and said, "I will try. I have been thinking and planning all the morning,

but I do not know how to begin to be useful. If I once began, I could go on. The sooner we are out of this huge expensive house, the better; if I could get my mother to go with the little girls to the sea-side. Take her away altogether from this home —take her——"

"Where?" inquired Mr. Adams; "she will not accept shelter in my house."

"I do not know," answered his niece, relapsing into all the helplessness of first grief; "indeed I do not know; her brother-in-law, Sir James Ashbrooke, invited her to the Pleasaunce, but my brother objects to her going there, his uncle has behaved so neglectfully about his appointment."

"Foolish boy!" muttered Charles; "this is no time to quarrel about trifles. The fact is, Mary, that the sooner you are all out of this house the better; there are one or two creditors, not for large sums certainly, but still men who will have their money; and if we do not quietly sell off, they will force us. The house might have been disposed of last week by private contract, but your mother would not hear of it. because the person who offered was a medical rival of my poor brother."

Mary did not hear the concluding observation; her eyes wandered from object to object in the room—the harp—the various things known from childhood. "Anything you and your mother wish, my dear niece," said her kind uncle, "shall be preserved—the family pictures—your harp, your piano—they are all hallowed memorials, and shall be kept sacred."

Mary burst into tears. "I do not," she said, "shrink from considering those instruments the means of my support; but although I know the necessity for so considering, I feel I cannot tell what at quitting the home of my childhood; people are all kind; you, my dear uncle, from whom we expected so little, the kindest of all; but I see, even in these early days of a first sorrow, indications of falling off. My aunt's husband has really behaved very badly about the appointment of my eldest brother; and as to the cadetship for the second—we had such a brief dry letter from our Indian friend—so many firsts on

the list, and the necessity for waiting, that I do not know how it will end."

"I wish, my dear, you could prevail on your mother, and sister, and all, to come to Repton," said Mr. Adams. "If your mother dislikes being in my house, I would find her a cottage near us; I will do all I can. My wife joins me in the determination to think that we have six additional children to look to. We differ from you in our habits; but our hearts and affections are no less true to you all. My Mary and you will be as sisters."

His niece could bear no more kindness. She had been far more bitterly disappointed than she had confessed even to her uncle; and yet the very bitterness of the disappointment had been the first thing that had driven her father's dying wail from her ears—that cry repeated so often and so bitterly in the brief moments left after his accident—"My children! My children!" He had not sufficient faith to commit them to God's mercy; he knew he had not been a faithful steward, and he could not bring himself from the depths of his spiritual blindness to call upon the Fountain that is never dried up to those who would humbly and earnestly partake of its living waters.

It was all a scene as of another world to the young, beautiful, petted, and fêted girl; it had made her forget the disappointment of her love, at least for a time. While her brothers dared the thunder-cloud that burst above their heads, her mother and sister wept beneath its influence. Mary had looked forth, and if she did not hope, she thought, and tried to pray; now, she fell weeping upon her uncle's shoulder. When she could speak, she said, "Forgive me: in a little time I shall be able to conquer this; at present, I am overwhelmed—I feel as if knowledge and sorrow came together—I seem to have read more of human nature within the last three days than in all my past life."

"It all depends, Mary, upon the person you meet," said Mr. Adams, "as upon the book you read: if you choose a foolish book or a bad book, you can expect nothing but vice or foolishness; if you choose a foolish companion, surely you cannot

expect kindness or strength." The kind-hearted man repeated to her all he had before said. "I cannot," he added, "be guilty of injustice to my children, but I can merge all my own luxuries into the one of being a father to the fatherless."

But to all the plans of Charles Adams, objections were raised by his eldest nephew and his mother: the youth could not brook the control of a simple straight-minded country man, whose only claim to be considered a gentleman, in his opinion, arose from his connexion with "his family." He was also indignant with his maternal uncle for his broken promise; and these feelings were strengthened by his mother's folly. Two opportunities for disposing of the house and its magnificent furniture were missed; and when Mrs. Adams complained to her nearest and most influential connexions, that her brother-in-law refused to make her any allowance unless she consented to live at Repton—expecting that they would be loud in their indignation at his hardness—they advised her by all means to do what he wished, as he was really the only person she had to depend upon. Others were lavish of their sympathy, but sympathy wears out quickly; others invited her to spend a month with them at their country seat, for change of air; one hinted how valuable Miss Adams's exquisite musical talent would be *now*. Mary coloured, and said, "Yes," with the dignity of proper feeling; but her mother asked the lady what she meant, and a little scene followed, which caused the lady to visit all the families in town of her acquaintance, for the purpose of expressing her sympathy with "those poor dear Adamses, who were so proud, poor things, that really there was nothing but starvation and the workhouse before them!" Another of those well-meaning persons—strong-minded and kind-hearted, but without a particle of delicacy—came to poor Mary, with all the *prestige* of conferring a favour.

"My dear young lady, it is the commonest thing in the world—very painful, but very common: the families of professional men are frequently left without provision. Such a pity!—because, if they cannot save, they can insure. We *all* can do *that*, but they do *not* do it; and, consequently, every-

where the families of professional men are found in distress: so, as I said, it is common; and I wanted you to suggest to your mother, that, if she would not feel hurt at it, the thing being so common—dear Dr. Adams having been so popular, so very popular—that while every one is talking about him, and you all, a very handsome subscription could be got up. I would begin it with a sum large enough to invite still larger. I had a great regard for him—I had indeed."

Mary felt her heart sink and rise, and her throat swell, so that she could not speak. She had brought herself to the determination of employing her talents for her own support, but she was not prepared to come with her family before the world as paupers. "We have no claim upon the public," she said at last. "I am sure you mean us kindly, but we have no claim. My dear father forwarded no public work—no public object; he gave his advice, and received his payment. If we are not provided for, it is no public fault. Besides, my father's children are able and willing to support themselves. I am sure you mean us kindly, but we have no claim upon public sympathy, and an appeal to it would crush us to the earth. I am very glad you did not speak first to my mother. My uncle Charles would not suffer it, even if my mother wished it."

This friend also departed to excite new speculations as to the pride and poverty of "poor dear Dr. Adams's family." In the world, however,—the busy London world,—it is idle to expect anything to create even a nine days' wonder. When the house and furniture were at last offered for sale, the feeling was somewhat revived; and Mary, whose beauty, exquisite as it was, had so unobtrusive a character as never to have created a foe, was remembered with tears by many: even the father of her old lover, when he was congratulated by one more worldly-minded than himself on the escape of his son in not marrying a portionless girl, reproved the unfeeling speaker with a wish that he only hoped his son might have as good a wife as Mary Adams would have been.

The bills were taken down, the house purified from the auction-mob—everything changed—a new name occupied the

doctor's place in the "Court Guide"—and in three months the family seemed as completely forgotten amongst those of whom they once formed a prominent part, as if they had never existed. When one sphere of life closes against a family, they find room in another. Many kind-hearted persons in Mrs Adams's first circle would have been rejoiced to be of service to her and hers, but they were exactly the people upon whom she had no claim. Of a high but poor family, her relatives had little power. What family so situated ever had any influence beyond what they absolutely needed for themselves? With an ill grace, she at last acceded to the kind offer made by Mr. Charles Adams, and took possession of the cottage he fixed upon, until something could be done for his brother's children. In a fit of proud despair, the eldest son enlisted into a regiment of dragoons; the second was fortunate enough to obtain a cadetship through a stranger's interference; and his uncle thought it might be possible to get the youngest forward in his father's profession. The expense of the necessary arrangements was severely felt by the prudent and careful country gentleman. The younger girls were too delicate for even the common occupations of daily life; and Mary, instead of receiving the welcome she had been led to expect from her aunt and cousins, felt that every hour she spent at the Grange was an intrusion.

The sudden death of Dr. Adams had postponed the intended wedding of Charles Adams's eldest daughter; and although her mother agreed that it was their duty to forward the orphan children, she certainly felt, as most affectionate mothers whose hearts are not very much enlarged would feel, that much of their own savings—much of the produce of her husband's hard labour—labour during a series of years, when her sister-in-law and her children were enjoying all the luxuries of life—would now be expended for their support: this to an all-sacrificing mother, despite *her sense of the duty of kindness*, was hard to bear. As long as they were not on the spot, she theorised continually, and derived much satisfaction from the sympathising observations of her neighbours, and was proud, *very* proud, of the praise bestowed upon her husband's benevolence; but when her sister-in-law's

expensive habits were in daily array before her (the cottage being close to the Grange)—when she knew, to use her own expression, "that she never put her hand to a single thing"—that she could not live without port wine, when she herself never drank even gooseberry, except on Sundays—never ironed a collar, never dusted the chimney-piece, or ate a shoulder of mutton, roast one day, cold the next, and hashed the third;—while each day brought some fresh illustration of her thoughtlessness to the eyes of the wife of the wealthy tiller of the soil, the widow of the physician thought herself in the daily practice of the most rigid self-denial. "I am sure," was her constant observation to her all-patient daughter, "I am sure I never thought it would come to this. I had not an idea of going through so much. I wonder your uncle and his wife can permit me to live in the way I do—they ought to consider how I was brought up." It was in vain Mary represented that they were existing upon charity—that they ought to be most grateful for what they received, coming as it did from those who, in their days of prosperity, professed nothing, while those who professed all things, had done nothing. Mary would so reason, and then retire to her own chamber to weep alone over things more hard to bear.

It is painful to observe what bitterness will creep into the heart and manner of really kind girls where a lover is in the case, or even where a commonplace dangling sort of flirtation is going forward; this depreciating ill nature, one to the other, is not by any means confined to the fair sex. Young men pick each other to pieces with even more fierceness, but less ingenuity; they deal in a cut-and-hack sort of sarcasm, and do not hesitate to use terms and insinuations of the harshest kind when a lady is in the case. Mary (to distinguish her from her high-bred cousin, she was generally called Mary Charles) was certainly disappointed when her wedding was postponed in consequence of her uncle's death; but a much more painful feeling followed when she saw the admiration her lover, Edwin Lechmere, bestowed upon her beautiful cousin. Mary Charles was herself a beauty—fair, open-eyed, warm-hearted—*the* beauty of Repton;

but though feature by feature, inch by inch, she was as handsome as Mary, yet in her cousin was the grace and spirit given only by good society; the manners elevated by a higher mind, and toned down by sorrow; a gentle softness, which a keen observer of human nature once told me no woman ever possessed unless she had deeply loved, and suffered from disappointed affection; in short, she was far more refined, far more fascinating, than her country cousin. Besides, she was unfortunate, and that at once gave her a hold upon the sympathies of the young curate: it did no more; but Mary Charles did not understand these nice distinctions, and nothing could exceed the change of manner she evinced when her cousin and her betrothed were together.

Mary thought her cousin rude and petulant; but the true cause of the change never occurred to her. Accustomed to the high-toned courtesy of well-bred men, which is so little practised in the middle class of English society, it never suggested itself, that placing her chair, or opening the door for her to go out, or rising courteously when she came into a room, was more than, as a lady, she had a right to expect; in truth, she did not notice it at all; but she did notice and feel deeply her cousin's alternate coldness and snappishness of manner. "I would not," thought Mary, "have behaved so to her if she had been left desolate; but in a little time, when my mother is more content, I will leave Repton, and become independent by my talents." Never did she think of the power delegated to her by the Almighty without feeling herself raised—ay, higher than she had ever been in the days of her splendour—in the scale of moral usefulness; as every one must feel whose mind is rightly framed. She had not yet known what it was to have her abilities trampled on or insulted; she had never experienced the bitterness consequent upon having the acquirements—which in the days of her prosperity commanded silence and admiration—sneered at, or openly ridiculed. She had yet to learn that the Solons, the lawgivers of English society, lavish their attentions and praise upon those who learn, not upon those who teach.

Mary had not been six months fatherless, when she was

astonished first by a letter, and then by a visit, from her former lover; he came to renew his engagement, and to wed her even then if she would have him; but Mary's high principle was stronger than he imagined. "No," she said; "you are not independent of your father, and whatever I feel, I have no right to draw *you* down into poverty. You may fancy now that you could bear it, but a time would come—if not to you, to me—when the utter selfishness of such conduct would goad me to a death of early misery." The young man appealed to her uncle, who thought her feelings overstrained, but respected her for it nevertheless; and in the warmth of his admiration, he communicated the circumstance to his wife and daughter.

"Refuse her old lover under present circumstances," repeated her cousin to herself as she left the room; "there must be some other reason than that; she could not be so foolish as to reject such an offer at such a time." Unfortunately, she saw Edwin Lochmere walking by Mary's side, under the shadow of some trees. She watched them until the foliage screened them from her sight, and then she shut herself into her own room, and yielded to a long and violent burst of tears. "It is not enough," she exclaimed, in the bitterness of her feelings, "that the comforts of my parents' declining years should be abridged by the overwhelming burden to their exertions—another family added to their own; it is not enough that an uncomfortable feeling has grown between my father and mother on this account, and that cold looks and sharp words have come where they never came before, but my peace of mind must be destroyed. Gladly would I have taken a smaller portion, if I could have kept the affections which I see but too plainly my cousin has stolen from me. And my thoughtless aunt to say, only yesterday, that 'at all events her husband was no man's enemy but his own.' Has not his want of prudent forethought been the ruin of his own children? and will my parents ever recover the anxiety, the pain, the sacrifices, brought on them by one man's culpable neglect? Oh, uncle! if you could look from your grave upon the misery you have caused!"—and then, exhausted by her own emotion, the

affectionate but jealous girl began to question herself as to what she should do. After what she considered mature deliberation, she made up her mind to upbraid her cousin with treachery, and she put her design into execution that same evening.

It was no easy matter to oblige her cousin to understand what she meant; but at last the declaration, that she had refused her old lover because she had placed her affections upon Edwin Lechmere, whom she was endeavouring to "entrap," was not to be mistaken; and the country girl was altogether unprepared for the burst of indignant feeling, mingled with much bitterness, which repelled the untruth. A strong fit of hysterics, into which Mary Charles worked herself, was terminated by a scene of the most painful kind, her father being upbraided by her mother with "loving other people's children better than his own," while the curate himself knelt by the side of his betrothed, assuring her of his unaltered affection. From such a scene Miss Adams hastened with a throbbing brow and a bursting heart. She had no one to counsel or console her; no one to whom she could apply for aid. For the first time since she had experienced her uncle's tenderness, she felt she had been the means of disturbing his domestic peace; the knowledge of the burden she was, and the burden she and hers were considered, weighed her to the earth; and in a paroxysm of anguish, she fell on her knees, exclaiming, "Oh, why are the dependant born into the world! Father, father, why did you leave us, whom you so loved, to such a fate!" And then she reproached herself for having uttered a word reflecting on his memory. One of the every-day occurrences of life—so common as to be hardly observed, is to find really kind good-natured people not "weary of well-doing." "Oh, really I was worn out with so and so; they are so decidedly unfortunate that it is impossible to help them," is a general excuse for deserting those whose continuing misfortunes ought to render them greater objects of sympathy.

Mr. Charles Adams was, as has been shown in our little narrative, a kind-hearted man. Estranged as his brother and himself had been for a number of years, he had done much to

forward, and still more to protect, his children. At first, this was a pleasure; but somehow his "benevolence," and "kindness," and "generosity," had been so talked about, so eulogised, and he had been so seriously inconvenienced by the waywardness of his nephews, the thoughtless pride of his sister-in-law, the helplessness of his younger nieces, as to feel seriously oppressed by his responsibility. And now the one who had never given him aught but pleasure, seemed, according to his daughter's representations, to be the cause of increased sorrow, the destroyer of his dear child's happiness. What to do he could not tell. His daughter, wrought upon by her own jealousy, had evinced, under its influence, so much temper she had never displayed before, that it seemed more than likely the cherished match would be broken off. His high-minded niece saved him any farther anxiety as far as she was concerned. She sent for and convinced him fully and entirely of her total freedom from the base design imputed to her. "Was it likely," she said, "that I should reject the man I love lest I should drag him into poverty, and plunge at once with one I do not care for into the abyss I dread? This is the common sense view of the case; but there is yet another. Is it to be borne that I should seek to rob *your* child of her happiness? The supposition is an insult too gross to be endured. I will leave my mother to-morrow. An old schoolfellow, older and more fortunate than myself, wished me to educate her little girl. I had one or two strong objections to living in her house; but the desire to be independent and away has overcome them." She then, with many tears, entreated her uncle still to protect her mother; urged how she had been sorely tried; and communicated fears, she had reason to believe were too well founded, that her eldest brother, feeling the reverse more than he could bear, had deserted from his regiment.

Charles Adams was deeply moved by the nobleness of his niece, and reproved his daughter more harshly than he had ever done before, for the feebleness that created so strong and unjust a passion. This had the contrary effect to that which he had hoped: she did not hesitate to say that her cousin had endeavoured to rob her both of the affection of her lover and her father.

The injured cousin left Repton bowed beneath an accumulation of troubles, not one of which was of her own creating,—not one of which she deserved; and all springing from the unproviding nature of him who, had he been asked the question, would have declared himself ready to sacrifice his own life for the advantage of that daughter, now compelled to work for her own bread. To trace the career of Mary Adams in her new calling, would be to repeat what I have said before. The more refined, the more informed the governess, the more she suffers. Being with one whom she had known in better days, made it even more hard to bend; yet she did her duty, and *that* is one of the highest privileges a woman can enjoy.

Leaving Mary for a moment, let us return to Repton. Here discord having once entered, was making sad ravages, and all were suffering from it. It was but too true that the eldest of the Adamses had deserted; his mother, clinging with a parent's fondness to her child, concealed him, and thus offended Charles Adams beyond all reconciliation. The third lad, who was walking the London hospitals, and exerting himself beyond his strength, was everything that a youth could be; but his declining health was represented to his uncle, by one of those whom his mother's pride had insulted, as a cloak for indolence. In short, before another year had quite passed, the family of the once rich and fashionable Dr. Adams had shared the fate of all dependants—worn out the benevolence, or patience, or whatever it really is, of their "best friends." Nor was this the only consequence of the physician's neglect of a duty due alike to God and to society; his brother had really done so much for the bereaved family, as to give what the world called "just grounds" for Mrs. Charles Adams's repeated complaints, "that now her husband was ruining his industrious family to keep the lazy widow of his spendthrift brother and her favourite children in idleness. Why could she not live upon the 'fine folk' she was always throwing in their faces?" Their daughter, too, of whose approaching union the fond father had been so proud, was now, like her cousin whom she had wronged by her mean suspicions, deserted; the match broken off after much bickering; one quarrel having

brought on another, until they separated by mutual consent. Her temper and her health were both materially impaired, and her beauty was converted into harshness and acidity.

Oh! how utterly groundless is the idea, that in our social state, where one human being must so much depend upon another, any man, neglecting his positive duties, can be called "only his own enemy!" What misery had not Dr. Adams's neglect entailed, not alone on his immediate family, but on that of his brother! Besides, there were ramifications of distress; he had died even more embarrassed than his brother had at first believed, and some tradespeople were consequently embarrassed; but the deep misery fell upon his children. Meanwhile Mrs Dr. Adams had left Repton with her younger children, to be the dependants of Mary in London.

It was not until a fatal disease had seized upon her mother, that Mary ventured to appeal again to her uncle's generosity. "My second brother," she said, "has out of his small means remitted her five pounds. My eldest brother seems altogether to have disappeared from amongst us; finding that his unhappy presence had occasioned so fatal a separation between his mother and you—a disunion which I saw was the effect of many small causes rather than one great one—he left us, and we cannot trace him. This has broken my poor mother's heart; he was the cherished one of all her children. My youngest brother has been for the last month an inmate of one of the hospitals which my poor father attended for so many years, and where his word was law. My sister Rosa, she upon whom my poor father poured, if possible, more of his affection than he bestowed upon me—my lovely sister, of whom, even in our poverty, I was so proud—so young, only upon the verge of womanhood—has, you already know, left us. Would to God that it had been for her grave, rather than her destroyer!—a fellow-student of that poor youth, who, if he dreamt of her dishonour, would stagger like a spectre from what will be his death-bed to avenge her. Poverty is one of the surest guides to dishonour; those who have not been tempted know nothing of it. It is one thing to see it, another to feel it. Do not think her altogether base, because she had

not the strength of a heroine. I have been obliged to resign my situation to attend my mother, and the only income we have is what I earn by giving lessons on the harp and piano. I give, for *two shillings*, the same instruction for which my father paid half-a-guinea a lesson : if I did not I should have no pupils. It is more than a month since my mother left her bed; and my youngest sister, bending beneath increased delicacy of health, is her only attendant. I know her mind to be so tortured, and her body so convulsed by pain, that I have prayed to God to render her fit for heaven, and take her from her sufferings. Imagine the weight of sorrow that crushed me to my knees with such a petition as that. I know all you have done, and yet I ask you now, in remembrance of the boyish love that bound you and my father together, to lessen her bodily anguish by the sacrifice of a little more; that she, nursed in the lap of luxury, may not pass from life with starvation as her companion. My brother's gift is expended; and during the last three weeks I have earned but twelve shillings; my pupils are out of town. Do, for a moment, remember what I was, and think how humbled I must be to frame this supplication; but it is a child that petitions for a parent, and I know I have never forfeited your esteem. In a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, my brother and my mother will meet my poor father face to face. Oh! that I could be assured that reproach and bitterness for the past do not pass the portals of the grave. Forgive me this, as you have already forgiven me much. Alas! I know too well that our misfortunes drew misfortunes upon others. I was the unhappy but innocent cause of much sorrow at the Grange; but, oh! do not refuse the *last* request that I will ever make." The letter was blotted by tears.

Charles Adams was from home when it arrived, and his wife, knowing the handwriting, and having made a resolution never to open a letter "from that branch of the family," did not send it after her husband, "lest it might tease him." Ten days elapsed before he received it; and when he did, he could not be content with writing, but lost not a moment in hastening to the address. Irritated and disappointed that what he really had done should

have been so little appreciated, when every hour of his life he was smarting in one way or other from his exertions – broken-hearted at his daughter's blighted health and happiness—angered by the reckless wildness of one nephew, and what he believed was the idleness of another—and convinced that Rosa's fearful step was owing to the pampering and mismanagement of her foolish mother—Charles Adams satisfied himself that, as he did not hear to the contrary from Mary, all things were going on well, or at least not ill. He thought as little about them as he could; but the letter of his favourite niece spoke strongly to his heart, and in two hours after his return home, he set forth for the London suburb from whence the letter was dated.

"Is Miss Adams at home?" inquired her uncle of a woman leaning against the door of a miserable house.

"I don't know; she went to the hospital this morning; but I'm not sure she's in; it's the second pair back; it's easy known, for the sob has not ceased there these two nights; some people do take on so"—

Charles Adams did not hear the concluding sentence, but sought the room; the door would not close, and he heard a low sobbing sound from within; he paused, but his step had aroused the mourner—"Come in, Mary—come in; I know how it is," said a young voice: "he is dead; one grave for mother and son—one grave for mother and son! I see your shadow, dark as it is."

Charles Adams entered the room; but his sudden appearance in the twilight, and evidently not knowing him, overcame the girl, his youngest niece, so much, that she screamed, and fell on her knees by her mother's corpse. He called for lights, and was speedily obeyed, for he put a piece of gold in the woman's hand; she turned it over, and as she hastened from the room, muttered, "If this had come sooner, she'd not have died of starvation, or burdened the parish for a shroud; it's hard the rich can't look to their own."

When Mary returned, she was fearfully calm. "No, her brother was not dead," she said; "the young were longer dying than those whom the world had worn out; the young knew so

little of the world, they thought it hard to leave it ;" and she took off her bonnet, and sat down ; and while her uncle explained why he had not written, she looked at him with eyes so fixed and cold, that he paused, hoping she would speak, so painful was their stony expression ; but she let him go on, without offering a word ; and when she stooped to adjust a portion of the coarse plaiting of the shroud—that mockery of " the purple and fine linen of living days"—her uncle saw that her hair, her luxuriant hair, was striped with white.

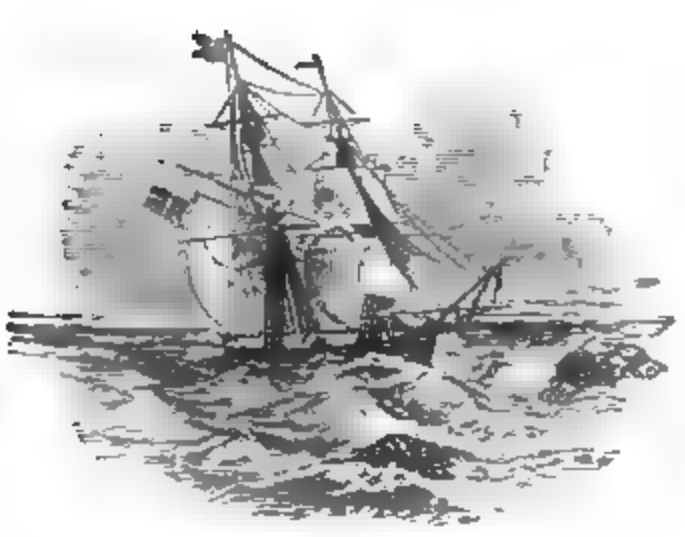
" There is no need for words now," she said at last ; " no need. I thought you would have sent ; she required but little—but very little ; the dust rubbed from the gold she once had would have been riches ; but the little she did require she had not, and so she died ; but that which weighs heaviest upon my mind was her calling so continually on my father, to know *why* he had deserted her ! she attached no blame latterly to any one, only called day and night upon him. Oh ! it was hard to bear—it was very hard to bear ! "

" I will send a proper person in the morning to arrange that she may be placed with my brother," said Charles.

" No," resumed Mary, " let the parish bury her ; even its officers were kind ; and if you bury her, or they, it is still a pauper's funeral. I see all these things clearly now ; death, while it closes the eyes of some, opens the eyes of others ; it has opened mine."

But why should I prolong this sad story ? It is not the tale of one, but of many. There are dozens, scores, hundreds of instances of the same kind, *arising from the same cause*, in our broad islands. In the lunatic asylum where that poor girl, even Mary Adams, has found refuge during the past two years, there are many cases of insanity arising from change of circumstances, where a fifty pounds' annual insurance would have set such maddening distress at defiance. I know that her brother died in the hospital within a few days ; and the pale sunken-eyed girl whose damp yellow hair and thin white hand are so eagerly kissed by the gentle maniac when she visits her, month by month, is the youngest, and, I believe, the *last* of her family, at least the last

in England. Oh, that those who foolishly boast that their actions only affect themselves, would look carefully abroad, and if they doubt what I have faithfully told, examine into the causes which crowd the world with cases even worse than I have here recorded!



THE DAILY GOVERNESS.

VERY early, every morning, she passes our gate; seldom a minute later than a quarter before eight. The cook at the pretty "hostelry" of "the Hoop, and Toy" knew this so well, that she set the kitchen clock by "the young lady in the cottage bonnet." I must pause to lament that the old-fashioned wayside inn, as you see

it here pictured, exists no longer; it has been swept away by the brick-and-mortar—that so rapidly destroys all relics of the past.

We used to boast that we resided in one of the most rural and quaint districts in the neighbourhood of London; we were so fond of our green lanes—our hedge-rows, so thick and trim, through which the most beautiful wild flowers wreathed and clustered, bordering the footways leading by such prolonged "short cuts" from Fulham and Chelsea to Brompton and Kensington. We were so proud of our old houses! Among them were "Cromwell House"—tall and ghastly as a ghost, cold and self-contained as the old Covenanter—alone in its tangled grounds, to which the wayfarer could discern no entrance; "Burleigh House"—desecrated to be sure, modernized, and, as the decorators' phrase goes, "beautified," and called Brompton Hall, but once the veritable dwelling of the great Lord Burleigh; the preserved relic of the "Queen's Elm," beneath which our royal Tiger-Queen Elizabeth sheltered; poor, erring, generous Nell Gwynne's house at Sandy End; a regular chapter of antiquities in Church Street and Cheyne Walk; and in the Fulham Road, the mansion where Locke wrote and Shaftesbury resided; in the quiet Palatine burying-ground, the precious relic of Sir Thomas More's dwelling, close by the water-garden where he took boat on many a pleasant summer evening. I cannot help thinking that we had good cause for pride; our neighbourhood was crowded with old records—in walls and ruins, and long chimneys and high gables; and in the more recent times the Prince of Wales (they say) often looked forth from a little abutting window belonging to a narrow rambling tenement, where our good neighbour the carpenter stores his chips. Moore, the poet, wrote some of his most loving and lovely songs in an erect, unpoetical-looking house in the Fulham Road, overlooking the nursery-grounds, nearly opposite the new hospital; and within a few doors of it, Curran breathed his last! To recur to more courtly matters.—In the small parlour of "The Grange," where Braham lived and entertained so sumptuously—the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert parted for the last time.——Our

neighbourhood *was* rich in *memorials—now* it is only rich in *memories.* The building mania has seized upon our lanes and "chases." Where the "bird-catcher" warned off the birds from the young grain, and the fields echoed the labourer's song, we hear the "click" of the stonemason's trowel, and the monotonous "knock" of the persevering carpenter. "Essex House" has given place to small tenements in brick and mortar; "Burleigh House" is stared out of countenance by stucco and plaster; "Shaftesbury House" is the refuge of age and infancy—the nursery and hospital of St. George's parish; "The Grange" is multiplied into villas; Canning's house, where of old the lovely Duchess of Gloucester resided, when the Gloucester Road was called Hogmore Lane, is yielding foot by foot to the ravages of "insect architecture," if we may so call the dry rot, by which it is infected; and, to speak last of our own small domestic troubles, the back windows of an overgrown square, that has sprung up like a mushroom in our bright "back field," are playing at bo-peep through our taller trees, and looking down with contempt upon our ancient mulberry—one of the few remaining, said to have been planted by command of the first James, who desired to feed silkworms in his "mild and sheltering park at Brompton."

But I must return to the "Daily Governess."

All the winter we could tell her approach by the plashing of her clogs, in the wet unrepaired piece of path at the corner, a standing disgrace to our highway inspectors—I was going to write them "highwaymen," for they take our rates and do not mend our ways. And here she passes noiselessly, as our summer flowers grow; but, like them, neither unobserved nor unremembered. Her bonnet is a coarse Dunstable; within the last week, the maroon-coloured ribbons have been replaced by those of *vapeur;* but they were both plainly put on. The *ruche* beneath is ornamented with a very little wreath of pale primroses; the black veil is still worn; but a parasol (not one of those fawn-coloured, baby-like fairy mushrooms of the present season, but a large, full-grown parasol, two years old at the very least), has replaced the heavy, brown cotton umbrella, whose weight her

thin white wrist seemed hardly able to sustain. The *broderie* on her collar is coarse, but the collar sits smoothly, and is very white; her shawl—what a useful shawl it has been! With the assistance of a boa she seemed to think it a sufficient protection against last winter's cold, and yet now, thrown a little open at the throat, and with the relief of a white collar, how well it looks! Her dress *then* was merino, now it is muslin-de-laine; her boots are exchanged for strong prunella slippers, fitting nicely; and she generally rests a roll of music or one or two books in the bend of her arm, the hand of which carries the parasol. I must not forget her brown silk bag—what odds and ends peep out of it at times, when 'tis over-full; shreds of German wool; paper patterns; netting, knotting, and knitting needles; half-a-dozen new pens, the nibs out, to avoid the risk of injury—or a round ruler; in short, let it be filled with what it will, the bag is never empty; and yet if you could only see the threadbare purse within, worn out, not by money, but by time—three pennies worth of halfpence at one end, and a silver fourpence and a shilling in the other—you would understand that the daily governess is anything but rich. She is not, strictly speaking, handsome, but she would be so, if the weight of anxiety that presses upon her broad, polished brow were removed. That countenance (the thoughtless would say) wants expression—it wants *variety* of expression, but the prevailing one is that of pallid, silent resignation; her eyes have an earnest, gentle look, when they raise the silken curtains that veil, not their brightness, but their sadness; and her smile, if a passer-by inquire the way, is as gentle as her eyes. She is neither short nor tall, dark nor fair; but her cheek is pale, not the palor of absolute ill health, for she is fortunate in being obliged to walk twice a-day through our still green and cheerful hedge-rows; it wears the hue of oppressed spirits. She is young, and might be mirthful—if she were not a DAILY GOVERNESS.

She knows enough to know, that if she had been taught a little more of all, or of one, of the accomplishments she is obliged to teach, she might command a higher salary; "finish young ladies," instead of trudging on with little children; but

her mother is an officer's widow, and could not spend a great deal upon one, when she had three children to educate and send into the world. She looks neither to the right nor to the left, except perhaps to glance, when she gets beyond the lane, at our church clock; but she finds she has no need to hasten her steps —unless when her mother is ill, she is always in time. Perhaps she casts a wistful eye towards the bookseller's placard, telling of her greatest luxury—a new book; or at the linendraper's, with an undefined hope, that by the time she receives her next month's salary she may seek a cheap Challis amongst his winter stock, now selling off, that would do very well for summer; dark colours are best for the street; ribbons do *not* attract her; she has trimmed her bonnet, and learnt the blessings that arise from thrift, not extravagance.

She reaches her destination, and knocks at the door, not with a tremulous hand, for it is practised in such indications of her humble arrival, but with the modest certainty that she will soon be admitted, because she is wanted. The footman hears the sound, but does not hurry to answer the *daily governess:* because he knows she is beloved by the nurse-girl, on whom she smiles, and to whom she speaks kindly: and the girl's home and parents are far in Cumberland. The *daily governess* can appreciate even the nurse-girl's attention. The children she has to instruct in this presuming mansion, are wayward and rude; but they are nevertheless affectionate, and would be what are called "good," if they were properly managed "out of school hours;" as it is, they have too much of their own way, and their mamma "rates" the daily governess *before them*, for their faults.

"Miss Grey, you must be firm and determined; Gertrude complains of her eyes. So, if you could manage to stay and teach her lessons, after three, for about half an hour, to prevent her poring over her book, she could repeat them the next morning. Poor darling! we must take care of her eyes."

The *daily governess* knows, if she perform this daily duty, she will lose a music pupil, to whom she gives a lesson, commencing at half-past three, for the sum of one and sixpence; but this family live in a large house, and have promised to recommend

her. The daily governess must pay the usual slave-tribute for patronage.

"Miss Grey, it will not do to teach dancing, without doing the figures *yourself* very often before the children."

"Miss Grey, Alicia's shoulders are growing round."

"Miss Grey, Alfred must not ink his tuckers."

"Miss Grey, poor little Louisa cannot finish the urn-stand; pray take it home and finish it for her."

Poor Miss Grey! her patience, gentleness, and all she has really done to improve those children, remains unapproved; but the faults of her *elèves* rise trumpet-tongued against her, when in reality she is in no way to blame; the affections and tenderness which her gentle heart yearns to bestow, is thrown back upon her. She is a *daily governess!* What sympathies can they have in common?

It was nine when she knocked at the door—it is now three. She was asked to take something at one, and she had a morsel of bread with a glass of milk and water. She remains with Miss Gertrude until half-past three, and then walks half a mile farther to give an eighteenpenny music lesson. She is in excellent spirits when it is over, for they will wait the extra time, rather than change. She says "they are very good." Why, the mother of the musical young lady knows she could not get such another lesson from any other teacher for less than half-a-crown. This is a busy day, it is half-past six, and the daily governess has not yet returned.

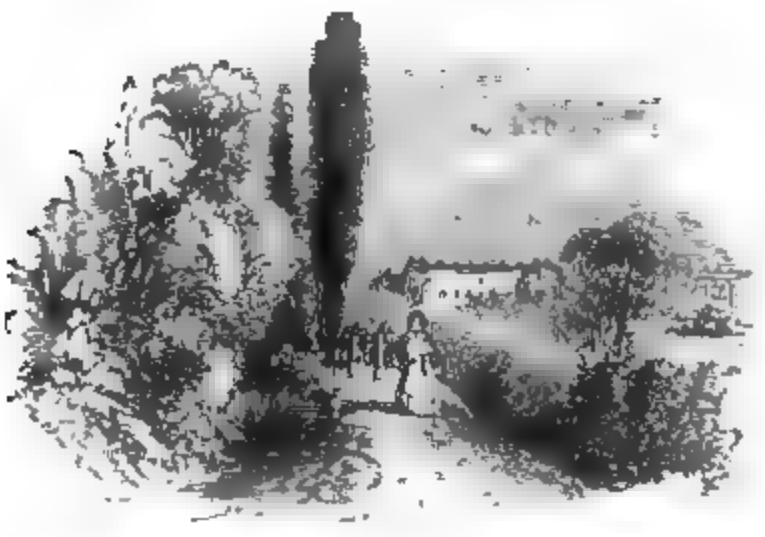
She had another lesson to give in the same street—not a music lesson, though the echo of "one, two, three," in her head seemed for eternity, but to read English for an hour with a young French lady, who met her at the door, kissed her on both cheeks, made her drink a cup of coffee—real coffee—and eat a biscuit, and then sat patiently "doing her translation" into such pretty non-descript English, that the *daily governess* chid and smiled until a peal of merry and mingled laughter rang through the room! but the laugh was succeeded on the part of the governess, by such weariness, that the kind foreigner would have detained her longer, not to read, but to rest, were it not that she told her

her mother would be uneasy; and then the lady, with a pretty air of mystery, opened her desk, and held up before her eyes a concert ticket—a real concert ticket—for two; it was to be her's, and would enable her and her mother to go together the next evening, which they would be sure to do, for to-morrow would not be a busy day, and they could walk there very well, and leave their bonnets at the entrance, or slide them off, and let them hang down by their sides—"so"—no one would notice them. Oh, it would be such pleasure—such dear pleasure! to hear sweet music, and her mother was so fond of music, her mother would enjoy it so much, she was very—*very* grateful. The French lady regretted that the distance was so great. The daily governess said, they would not mind that; they were only a mile and a half from Hyde Park Corner—her mother could walk *that*—and then an eightpenny drive would bring them to the concert-rooms. Those fly-cabs were so respectable and convenient—it would be charming;—she did not mind fatigue; and Miss Grey commenced her return with a quick step and a flushed cheek. She thought, poor thing! though she had been teaching since nine, and it was now nearly half-past six—she thought it had been a very happy day. As she walked rather quickly, some impertinent fellows attempted to peep under her bonnet; but she poked the big parasol very low at that side, and walked on; if the attempt was repeated, her cheek flushed, her heart beat more quickly, and her eyes filled with tears. *Then, indeed, she felt she had no one to protect her.*

She stopped at a shop at Lowndes Terrace, where black silk and white kid gloves are only a shilling a pair. She feared they were not very good, not as good as at Challacombes', but then they were *very* cheap, and she fidgetted her purse nearly out of the bag—then paused, and considered a moment or two; so much consideration for a single shilling! Those only who work for a shilling know how necessary it is to ponder how it should be spent. She looked through the window at them—hesitated, and walked on; perhaps she will wait till her mother is with her, the following evening, and then she can choose for her. *What her mother chooses* is always best. She has passed our

gate. She is evidently very much fatigued, her steps lag heavily; she lodges with her mother in that little cottage, for the benefit of the soft pure air of good old Brompton. And now you see the widow's cap through the young stems and leaves of the jessamine. *The daily governess* quickens her step;—she pulls from her bosom the concert ticket; and after she has received her mother's kiss—before her mother's hands can untie her bonnet—she holds it up before her! Oh, how very much a little drop of innocent pleasure sweetens the cup of toil! Drink of it, long, and deeply, it will not become bitter on the tongue, nor evil to the heart.

A daily governess has, at least, her evenings. Sometimes, not often, a friend drops in. To-night our patient, good, industrious girl has thrust her pretty swollen feet into her mother's easy shoes; and while the widow reads, or pours out their frugal tea, she is quilling, or snipping, or arranging something white—a little finery for "to-morrow" evening. And now the work and books are put by—the candle snuffed—they read and pray—not long, but fervently, and then to bed, despite the labour, which, fair reader, you shudder even to think upon. The *daily governess* sleeps soundly, and will awake as sweet, as patient, and as gentle—and it may be, a trifle more cheerful,—to-morrow, than she was to-day.



THE MOTHER.

FOR once only I saw the Lady Elizabeth Montague angry; and then it appeared but a slight thing which excited her displeasure. She had been called to London on some business of moment, and the housekeeper took advantage of the opportunity to dust and arrange the favourite sitting-room. The crimson velvet curtains were withdrawn from their golden bands, and the rich carpet, that had imbedded in its luxuriance many a silk-clad foot, was subjected to the rude brushes of two experienced housemaids.

Nor was this all—the pictures were taken down, and not a few spiders'-webs dislodged from the gilt cornice and the curious carvings of the frame-work that encircled the apartment. In replacing the pictures, the housekeeper unfortunately displaced two miniatures, which had hung the one over the other; they were portraits, so alike in age, features, colour, and size, that it required a quick memory to call to mind that one of them had worn powder: I have since learned, that the frame of the "powdered" picture was of *pure* gold, that of the other only gilt. The one represented a gentleman of some two or three and twenty years old, of a handsome and gracious countenance, with deep blue eyes, and an expanded brow. Perhaps there might have been a more daring look portrayed in the features of the other; but it may be that my imagination conjured up this character, after hearing the histories of both. They had hung, as I have said, one above the other, in a little niche, appropriated to them alone; and very pretty they looked—and so thought the housekeeper, good soul! after she had re-arranged them.

"My lady will never know they have been touched," she said to me; "but, poor dear lady, I don't think she sees the dust as clearly as she used forty years ago, when first she came here, the most beautiful bride that ever the sun shone upon—it's a great blessing to have good eye-sight! and if I don't need it, nobody does, that has so many trolloping hussies to look after.—But, as I live, here's my lady's carriage!—well, if ever!—but all's right—I guess I should have got it if the miniatures had not been in their places."

And away hurried Mistress Margery Rolls, at the head of the household, to welcome home her mistress. Presently, I saw the Lady Elizabeth descend the steps of her old-fashioned carriage. A footman, upon whose arm she rested, remained uncovered as she entered the great hall. I fancied her step was feeble, yet it abated nothing of the proud dignity of her carriage; and, in another instant, her voice sounded along the gallery leading to the crimson room, as her favourite sitting-chamber was called. After exchanging a brief, but kind, salutation with one who

believes she held much of the favour of this extraordinary woman, her eye rested on the miniatures.

"Who has done this?" she inquired. "Who has presumed to do this?" The housekeeper, trembling—for it was her lady's looks more than her words that alarmed her—confessed something touching "dust and dusting." Lady Elizabeth heeded nothing of her confession, but, with her own hands, which vibrated with agitation to her fingers' ends, altered the position of the miniatures, placing the one with powder above the other. She then left the apartment, and I did not see her again until the hour of dinner.

There was something so elevated and noble in all the arrangements of Montague House, that it invariably called up the visions of those days when the baronial hospitality of England formed the theme of harp and song: the magnificent broad oaken staircase, dimly lighted by deep arched windows of coloured glass; the dense dull figures, that seemed to smile grimly from their ancient frames, as you descended or ascended the polished stairs; the long intricate galleries, leading from right to left, intersected with nooks, and crossings, and passages, that could not fail to perplex; the superb hangings of the various sleeping apartments, that flashed upon you through the opening doors—some of curiously wrought green velvet patterns, on a white satin ground, which the tint of years had sobered, but not destroyed—others of crimson, lined with yellow, the draperies folding round the pillars of some ancient bed, rich in white and gold relief; the ancient chapel, where the devotions of the noble Montagues of many a by-gone century had been strangely mingled with the pomps and vanities of this world—the knee, it is true, knelt at the altar, but the hand and eye traced the armorial bearings, in all their intricate and mysterious emblazonings, in the very place where such bravery should be all forgotten—the banner and the flag hung mouldering from the walls—and the moth found a dwelling and a feast, within the time-honoured hassocks, where royalty, if report speaks true, had often prayed; then the superb, and yet grave-looking, rooms, leading to each other, the windows opening into a park, where

wood and water, hill and dale, vied to take from England its reproach of insipidity—the towering walls, hung with the arts of kingdoms—the pure, and almost embodied, portraits of Vandyke, Lely, Reynolds, and the gentlemanly Lawrence, and the placid landscapes of Gainsborough, all claiming attention, and demanding tribute from the eye and heart; the cold but magnificent sculpture, standing out, I had almost said, in native grandeur, and rebuking, in its silent dignity, the thoughts that wander to less holy things; the library, stored to the very ceiling with books, those moral treasures of the world, that would fain teach us the sweets of wisdom without giving us to taste of the bitter waters of experience; and then the troops of venerable domestics, silent of foot and lip, attentive both with eye and ear.

The Lady Elizabeth herself—the great, the rich, the noble—or, better still, as she was emphatically called by her people—the good Lady Elizabeth—was in admirable keeping with Montague House. At the time I tell of, she had completed her sixtieth birth-day. She was tall of stature, and what her figure wanted in roundness was concealed by the ample folds of her black satin robe, which opened down the front, over a petticoat of the same material; her sleeves were confined at the elbows by *cordons of* bullion, and the lower portion was open half-way up the arm, so that a full inner sleeve of most exquisite cambric was seen descending to the hand, where it was terminated by a frill of the richest lace; her cap was ever of peculiar fashion, and yet, from the fact of its being so adapted to her age and countenance, it excited no observation, except in commendation of its fitness—it was shaped something like the head-dress of Mary Stuart, but a band of crimped crape encircled the under portion of her countenance; her own hair, of a perfect whiteness, separated over a high but wrinkled brow; and she wore no ornament, except a chain of the finest gold, united at intervals by stars of diamonds, rivalling all I had ever seen in brilliancy and quality. It was a noble sight to see that aged lady rise from the head of her table, after dealing forth hospitality to some of the greatest in the land, and sweep through troops of ancient servitors, accompanied by youth, and love, and beauty, across her marble and

golden halls—the dispenser of good and of happiness to all around her.

You ask, "Was not she happy?"

"She was a widow—and childless!"

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"You now know," continued Lady Elizabeth, "why I replaced the miniatures; and this manuscript will convince you that, as all is not gold that glitters, so all is not happiness that smiles. You say, you thought me the most enviable person you ever knew;—decide if such be the case, when you have read what I have written. But never look upon human nature without calling to mind a beautiful fable, the spirit of which I remember, though its words have escaped my memory. Jupiter once gave permission to a number of repining mortals to lay down their troubles, provided they agreed to bear each the misfortune of his neighbour: to this they joyfully consented; but when they came to weigh and consider the nature of the new burdens, they begged that Jove would permit them to resume their own.—Lady Elizabeth Montague," continued the lady, "never intends to appear before the world as the author of her own life; but you are a professed studier of human nature—it is the book you love to read—and, if not read deeply, it is a question with me, whether it ought to be perused at all. I have written all I suffered—and much that I thought—during a long half-century. I should have suffered less, had I not inherited, with vast possessions, the distinguishing characteristic of my race"—the old lady drew herself up with the dignity of an empress, who would use earth as a footstool—"I was PROUD!"

I saw that pride had, indeed, been her besetting sin, for there was a feeling of unequalled pride in the confession: and, hardly knowing what to say, I observed, "It was the sin by which angels fell." Lady Elizabeth turned the light of her flashing eye upon me; for a moment it gleamed with unusual brightness, and a smile of mingled scorn and triumph flitted over her aristocratic features; but the flashing of her eye quenched within its own deep socket, and the smile faded, as, pressing my

arm with her long thin fingers, she replied, "And the sin by which devils triumphed."

The manuscript was written in a fair Italian hand—stiff and formal, but exact and equal in its proportions. I perused it to the end with an interest which only the *real* occurrences of life can excite.

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"I was the sole child of a proud and noble family, branches of which had intermarried, at different periods, not only into many royal continental families, but had mingled hand and blood with the Tudors, the Plantagenets, and the unfortunate House of Stuart. My mother never forgave either herself or me for that I was born a female, when a heir was so much more desired: but my father—my beloved father!—loved me for myself; and he loved me, too, because, unlike my mother, I delighted in the pursuits he cherished.

"My mother's pride was of the abstract and more narrow kind: it was a small weak pride—she was charmed at being a countess, and vexed because, if her husband died, I could not be an earl; but that was all. She had wedded my father for the distinction of a coronet, and he selected her because she was pretty, and belonged to a family which, in the time of the Tudors, had been connected with ours; consequently, my father's honour was concerned in keeping up the dignity of his relatives. I was fashioned according to the habits of the young ladies of my time, but readily gave in to my father's love of heraldry and history.

"When I was fifteen, my mother died; and I sorrowed for her, more because England had lost a countess, than that I had been deprived of a parent. I thought it was dreadful that we should be subjected to a shroud—a pall—a coffin! And more than once the question was debated within my own mind, whether my mother was a countess in the spirit world; if she was not, I felt assured she would be very miserable. It must not be inferred from this, that I was ignorant of the grand points and principles of Christianity. Religion—the established religion of England—was a portion of our prerogative: the chaplain

read prayers daily in our ancient and beautiful chapel, and said grace after meals with a correctness which, in due time, entitled him to a rectory; when another succeeded, who performed equally well the duties of his station. A young heiress of sixteen is seldom given to theological controversy: I had every reason to be happy and satisfied with the dispensation of good—I knew of no evil; for my father had a bountiful hand and a liberal heart, and there was neither poverty nor want within our towns or villages. We passed among our people, and blessings greeted us on every side. To the poor he was ever condescending—they were his equals and his superiors who called him proud. Once only, during his life-time, I went to Court; and though my wealth, and what was deemed my beauty, created a great sensation, and the nobles of the land vied for the heiress of Montague, yet we returned within a month to our country halls. The truth is, he was not there lord paramount,—in a Court crowded with men of equal rank, and doubtless better skilled as courtiers; he could not exist without the homage of the lip—he missed the salutations and the deserved blessings of his tenants—and, having trained me in a strange mixture of pride and usefulness, he expected that I was to be totally unmindful of the adulations and attentions which have so many charms for a young, and not unhandsome woman.

"Offer after offer was rejected, either by my father or myself. I liked to feel my power over hearts as well as acres; and, I confess, I gloried not a little in my triumphs. Yet was I neither a flirt nor a coquette. I was too well principled for the former—too proud to condescend to the latter; and at one-and-twenty I remained in a state of single blessedness.

"On the day I came of age, my cousin, Edward Montague, arrived at Montague House. He had been abroad for many years, and we had not met since my days of childhood. It was in the carved hall that the dance and the festa was prepared to do me honour. I sat on an elevated seat at the upper end, surrounded by six young ladies of the first families in the county, who had requested permission to act as my attendants. They were dressed in the costume of the Court of Louis the Four-

teenth, the period chosen by me as best calculated to display the gorgeous and brilliant jewels of our house A tiara of diamonds sparkled on my brow ; my zone and armlets were of the same fashion and quality ; and tassels of the finest gold, enriched with gems, descended from the zone to my feet. Children, habited as the slaves of Eastern lands, moved about the room, flinging incense from their golden censers, and presenting the most odorous flowers to our guests. From behind a curtain of thin crimson silk, at the back of the orchestra, poured forth a flood of light which enchanted every eye ; while the harpists, and players on the most exquisite instruments, appropriately dressed, appeared as if amid clouds tinted with the most delicate hues of the rainbow. It was, in truth, a gorgeous scene, and one I still love to think upon ; for there, elated by the homage of hundreds of friends—(friends !)—my father presented my cousin, Edward Montague, to my remembrance. He had passed, as I have said, many years abroad, and, I knew, had been received with flattering distinctions at almost all the European courts. His person was everywhere admired, but his learning and chivalrous honour claimed from all the highest consideration. From the moment he first entered, I felt anxious to gain his good opinion, a feeling I had never known before ; for it appeared to me as if I had inherited the suffrages of all mankind. ' And so,' he said, ' you are really my little cousin Elizabeth ! *Lady* Elizabeth—I remember, you were always too stately as a child to play ; now, doubtless, you are too stately as a woman to smile.'

" ' The lady spares her smiles, in pity to her slaves,' said one of my flatterers.

" I shall never forget the look of contempt thrown by my cousin on the speaker ; I thought it perfectly uncalled for—indeed, I wondered how any one could feel displeasure in my presence. I spoke to Edward of the ladies of Italy—he praised their grace, their noble yet gentle manners ; of the ladies of France—he commended their sprightliness and freedom from affectation ; of the German ladies—he told of their good sense and matronly habits, of their prudence and homely virtues. Had I talked of the Esquimaux, he would have found something

to approve; and yet *he approved not me.* It was evident that he debated, within his own mind, whether my jewels or myself deserved the most admiration—his eye glanced coldly over both; and he spoke, notwithstanding the festivity, in a voice which fell sadly, yet sweetly, on my ear.

"I thought the halls and the company less and less brilliant as the evening advanced; heaviness came over all—the lights seemed dim unto mine eyes, the music tuneless to my ears. I sought, eagerly and earnestly, for his approbation, but he gave it not. I went dispirited to my chamber; and, as my maids unclasped the coronet from my brows, I remembered the text of Scripture: it was—

"'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'

"How often since have I proved its truth! Days and weeks passed, and Edward remained our guest, often annoying the heiress of Montague by claiming her respect—a troublesome feeling to one who demanded homage from all the world. I was seated one morning in the embrasure of one of the library windows, when Edward, accompanied by his favourite friend, Sir Frederick Monson, entered, deeply engaged in conversation. The first sentence nailed me to my seat—I had no power either to move or speak. It was the voice of Sir Frederick.

"'I only wish Lady Elizabeth paid me half the attention she does you—I should need no further encouragement.'

"How the blood mounted to my cheeks! my temples throbbed intensely; and I fancied they must have heard the beating of my heart.

"'You are wrong, Sir Frederick,' replied my cousin, 'you are very wrong; the Lady Elizabeth regards herself too much to think of any other human being, either in the way of affection or admiration. Charitable she is, from her love of patronage; beauty she possesses in a dangerous degree; wit, and much nobleness of soul, are hers; but all—all overgrown by the rankest pride that ever had root in woman's heart!'

"'The greater, then, your triumph, fair gentleman, who have conquered it.'

"'I deny that I have done so; I disbelieve the possibility of

such a triumph: but even if it were the case, could any free-born man submit to her caprices? No, no!—for a gentle, a true woman, I could live and die; and were Elizabeth poor, and a trifle humble, with that elevated soul, that exquisite beauty, and my own small but independent fortune, I would then act—with a difference Marry, she may—an emperor, if she can get him —but there is no room in her heart for love. Why, every day, she sits at dinner a moving mass of jewels.'

"That day I made my appearance with a white rose only in my hair, and Edward complimented me for the first time. I resolved to attempt a conquest, simply because I thought myself scorned, and was determined to be victorious. I discovered, ere many weeks, that I had absolutely riveted chains around my own heart, instead of enchaining another. Bitter was my anguish; my proud heart felt crushed within me. If I could have discovered that he regarded me with the least affection, I should have been satisfied; but thus to be won unsought!—it was a dagger planted—rankling—festering—in my bosom. Bitterly did I weep over what I considered a degradation; when the sudden and unanticipated death of my beloved parent brought to light that I had both a friend and lover in my cousin Edward. . . . . Enough of this. We were married when two years of mourning for my father had expired. Married!—what an infinity of meaning is comprised in these three little syllables - what a quantity of hope and fear, of happiness or misery, do they imply! My husband was a Montague, so that the honours of our house remained fresh as ever; he was one, too, who rather increased than diminished the very quality he so earnestly condemned; for I was more proud of Edward Montague than of either my riches or my ancestry. I felt myself elevated, indeed, in the scale of moral existence, when honoured by his love: and well I might; for a more noble, a more glorious creature never lived: he dwelt upon the earth without being contaminated by its baseness; his mind was a treasure-house, filled with all that was admirable in ancient or modern times; and his knowledge was blended with a taste so refined, yet so true, that it consecrated whatever it arranged. Nor was this all: his temper was of so

gentle a nature that the lamb might lick his hand, and ringdoves nestle in his bosom; yet, being justly angered, he carried himself with such veritable bravery, that his enemies (if, indeed, he had any) would quail beneath the lightning of his deep blue eye. With what a holy, yet decided, spirit would he reprove my faults, teaching me humility by his own example, and the wisdom of holiness by his own life! Obedience to him was no task: I looked—and looked—and loved; *loved!*—that is too cold a phrase—may God forgive me for it—I worshipped!—worshipped my husband as devoutly as ever I worshipped my Creator! Hitherto, happiness had fenced me in on every side; the little I had suffered rendered my blessings all the brighter, and still my joyfulness increased—for I became a mother!

"Poets have written, and may write—write on for ever—but they never can portray, never convey even an idea, to those who have not experienced them, what a mother's feelings are at the first faint cry of her first-born child! the creature of her love—the cause of her late agony—breathes, lives; the infant's feeble wail is as the trumpet of hope sounding to her heart, of days—months—ages—of happiness. She looks on the faint tracery of its features, and discovers a beauty seen by no other eye; she trembles lest her embrace of love should injure its delicate limbs; she places it on her husband's bosom, and, if she never prayed before, she prays then; what she prays she hardly knows, but the ALMIGHTY hears, and notes her petition; and my belief is, that, if fitting, it is always granted at such an hour. Oh! that a woman's prayer was ever—'Lord, this babe is thine! do thou what is best and meetest for it!' Such is the prayer of the humble and believing Christian—such was my husband's prayer—but such, I fear me, was not mine.

"Our boy grew; and another child came—a little delicate girl, who was enveloped in cotton, and sheltered even from the summer air; but she, too, lived, and danced after butterflies on our shaven lawn, and was a sweet, soft, silent thing; yet, when she tossed her yellow hair from off her small and lovely features, it was as if a gleam of sunshine sparkled, then flitted from your sight. A proud woman exults in her sons, but a tender father

loveth best the imploring weakness of a delicate girl. She is a renewal of the poetry of his youth—a sort of living dream—shadowy and trembling like a moonbeam—which he may wake and lose in a brief moment; - and my Olympia was lost! In the morning she had played at our feet with her brother—she had chased the shadows over the green turf—she had watched the bee collecting honey for its cell, and had strewed the sweetest flowers in its path, that, as she said, 'it might not work so hard' —she had done all this, and her father noted, that her voice sounded more of joy, in its quiet laughter, than it had ever done before. That night *his* beloved, his cherished one, was a cold corpse—she sickened and died within a few short hours. My husband sat with her on his knees in tearless agony—for me, I wept. You see me stern, severe, and cold—*sorrow has hung its icicles on my heart.* Ay, despite our golden pageantry, grim Death *will* come—'tis a sad truth for those who live on gold; and even now, I love not much to think of it—and why? There is *another* text which I remember—

" 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'

" If God had taken all my purpled state, I think I could have borne it; my heart *might* have rebelled, but my lips would not have murmured—would not, as they have done, have disturbed the night from its allegiance to repose. Great was my pride, and great has been my penalty. Yet, still I ask—"

Here a considerable quantity of the manuscript was effaced; and, if I noted right, the paper was blistered by tears. What would she have asked? I longed, but dreaded to inquire. I fear me 'twas not mercy; for, though she had quailed, she had not sunk, before sorrow; and her lofty carriage, her proud, yet generous conduct, and, above all, the quick rich glance of her eagle eye, recorded a spirit glorying in earthly dominion. With how blind a zeal do we carve out our own misery, magnifying. by a singular and pernicious effort of human skill, the trials of a sensitive imagination into the real miseries of life! The trials

and troubles of this golden lady were not, however, *imaginary—they were real.*

I continued.

"For some time previous to the loss of my little girl, I had observed, with breathless anxiety, a sort of morbid, dreamy habit, in which my husband seemed often to indulge. It was too restless to be called melancholy—too intense to be disturbed without considerable care. I have sat for hours together, watching his eyes fixed on vacancy, and his lips moving occasionally in abstracted motion: at such times, I have recalled his attention by singing at first in a low tone, snatches of his favourite songs; sometimes a sentiment appeared to rivet his attention,—at another period it was the melody that recalled his wandering thoughts. I would often inquire what he had been thinking of; but he invariably parried my question, and atoned for his inattention by redoubled vivacity—a vivacity which I well knew was foreign to his nature. My blessed husband! Years and years have passed; many of unutterable happiness, a greater number of intense misery—misery which the shining of my jewelled state increased a thousand-fold; for obscurity would have softened and concealed my sorrow, but the glare and the glitter of situation held it up, as a light set upon a hill, to illumine the humble as to the wretchedness of rank. Years have, indeed, passed; and my hair is grey, my step feeble, my eyes have melted their lustre into tears, and I am an aged woman, tottering on the brink of my ancestors' vaulted graves! Yet, Edward, thou art with me still! In the deep hours of midnight I listen to thy counsel; thy shadow comes before me in all the beauty of feeling and expression; the reproofs so wisely timed that, even to my proud ears, they sounded more like praise than censure; the gentle firmness, blending the husband and the friend in one; the quiet eye—I see it now as when in life—so still, and yet so dignified! Never does a proud thought grow into action, or a scornful word rise to my lip, that *his eye* comes not upon me; and its behest is done—for the action is repented of—the word suppressed!

"Have mercy, Heaven! those are the remembrances of my earlier days; but there are others of far different import. I remember after Olympia's death, how His abstraction increased, until—but the records, the public papers, those chartered chroniclers of whatever chances of evil—*they* told the news!—they surmised upon it—the Court chattered of it—the members of the House that had often rung with acclamations, as his fine voice, rolling like a flood of light, dispersed the mists from their minds, and sent conviction to their stubborn hearts—the very members of *that* House had learned to prate of him as '*poor* Edward Montague!' I could not understand how it was—but the Almighty had taken the soul before the body had yielded to corruption.

"He knew me not—*my husband looked into my face and did not know me*—he did not know his own child! I could have borne the revilings, the wildness, of a madman; but the helpless, hopeless—Alas! alas! that ever I was born!

* * * * * *

"My son—I lived for him! Time was gaining upon him, as upon us all; but as yet he had the advantage of the destroyer—he distanced him in the race, for his intellects were far beyond his age: his beauty!—but it was enough for me that he was like his father; he was in every respect—in almost every respect—all that I could desire; and, with all the devotedness of a mother, I looked forward to what he would be hereafter; the staff of a noble house, the observed of all observers. I did perpetual violence to my own feelings, by endeavouring to nip every bud that promised a blossom of pride; for, though my husband had restrained the haughtiness of my nature, and though, Heaven knows, he was himself a living illustration of what may chance to the best and greatest, yet I cannot *now* deceive myself into the belief that restraint is conquest; and my poor boy inherited, to the full, his mother's PRIDE! His temper was violent in the extreme; and, with his father's affliction ever before mine eyes, I yielded to, rather than opposed, his paroxysms of rage. I dreaded lest I might, by contradiction, bring forward some dormant malady that would, a second time, destroy my

hopes of everything like happiness. Time! that bane and blessing of existence—that purveyor of good and evil, softened much of the agony I at first endured; it taught me patience. My husband never left his own dwelling; a separate wing of Montague House was appropriated to his sole use; and, though he did not know me, he was evidently pleased and comforted by my attentions. His wanderings!—I will not stamp upon this silent paper: the wanderings of a maniac should be as sacred a deposit with a wife *as her husband's faults; a woman forgets what is due to herself when she condescends to that refuge of weakness—a confidant:* a wife's bosom should be the tomb of her husband's failings, and his character far more valuable, in her estimation, than his life. If this be not the case, she pollutes her marriage vow.

"I have said that time softened my sorrow—it did more—it created new hopes. At Harrow, my son carried all before him —his abilities were acknowledged by masters and pupils; but, with all my partiality, I saw that his temper, instead of being improved, had acquired strength by frequent victory.

"The heir of forty thousand a-year is seldom kept in order at a public school, except by a lad who has fifty in prospective.

"I learned that my son had constantly conquered; that he had been first of the first; that, in mind, he was without a competitor, and that he had distanced all his compeers in manly and athletic exercises. Previous to his going to Oxford, it was determined that he should spend some months at home; the truth was, I feared that his health might suffer from continued application, and I wished also to scan more distinctly into his character.

"My fears were soon aroused, and my perceptions quickened.

"Of his classical attainments I was no competent judge; but, certainly, extreme quickness often, too often, I thought, superseded the necessity for study. He wrote verses with great facility; but I saw, with feelings that cannot be described, that his models were the most licentious of our English poets. Of his taste for what he termed 'old English sports,' he gave sufficient proof, by living more in the tennis-court and stables than

in the library or drawing-room. He heard me reprove and reason, reason and reprove, with tolerable patience; but, when I kept him longer than he deemed necessary, there grew a wild impatience in his eye that made me shudder and be silent.

"'Ralph!' I heard him say, one evening, to his favourite companion, after I had endeavoured to convince him of the necessity for closer study, and extorted something like a promise of obedience to my request, 'Ralph, do you know how I silence Lady Elizabeth? *I tip her the madman's eye—so—and she turns quite pale!*'

"Merciful heavens! was it possible that my son could jest at his father's infirmity—could make sport of his mother's feelings! I knew not what to do or what to say. Was this indeed my son—my first-born my only one—him on whom I had poured out the full torrent of maternal affection—the being of my dreams—the son of him who was all benevolence and honourable deeds, who abhorred deceit, and scorned all things unworthy! Alfred's extravagance and utter heedlessness I little thought of, for I entertained the opinion that they are the strongest and noblest trees which require the most pruning—but the expedient, to rid himself of my reproofs by such a means!—When, in the twilight of that same evening. I sat gazing from hour to hour upon my poor senseless husband, who, silently and with folded arms, paced up and down the long verandah, which I had built to enable him to exercise in all weathers; when I marked his eye, still exquisite in form, but mantled by the dread disease, shorn of its beams, yet looking towards the heavens and pointing with childish glee to the stars as, one by one, they left their mysterious caverns and paced the paths allotted to them by the great Architect of all immensity; when, I say, I looked at that human wreck, I trembled—I shuddered to think upon the frail bark about to launch on the ocean of public life.

My husband had been struck by Heaven; but my son!—I dreaded he would fall by earthly means—become contaminated by the low and base, the prey of designing sharpers and knaves. Feeling, I was but too well convinced, he lacked; and I doubted his principles—I feared their stability; I dreaded that those

born of noble parents were subject to the self-same vices as those in less exalted spheres; and, thoroughly alive to the belief that the disgrace of the child is the completion of a parent's misery, no matter what her former trials may have been, I prayed, while drops of agony burst upon my brow, that I might be spared the dreadful results that would arise if my son should be unworthy of his name. I brooded in silence over the disappointment which I already felt; I mixed still less in society, and restrained my son, perhaps too much, from the sports and company of youths of his own age:—perhaps, had I yielded on minor points, and indulged him in trifles, he might not have run so restive in matters of greater consequence. I was mortified that a Montague should require the same pastime as a Jones or a Johnson; I thought of the proud days of my own youth, and, soured rather than humbled by the trials I had experienced, I made but small allowance for the difference between a girl and boy, and, I fear me, too little for the deteriorating influence of the times. The people now-a-days look upon nobility as a thing to be talked with—used and abused—as if it were of themselves; and though my son's pride effectually prevented him from entering into this belief, it was of the spurious kind that too frequently mistakes insolence for dignity; so that I was often as much shocked at his assumption of greatness, where it was uncalled for, as at his want of it where it was necessary to his state.

"He went to Oxford; and I was richly complimented on my son's beauty, wit, and talent. I was told that he excelled in qualifications so necessary for a true gentleman; and I resolved to supply him liberally with money, and such advice as I could offer. The knowledge of his faults was locked within my own bosom; and the world - *our* world—were loud in their applause. Mothers, rich and titled ones, told me that they *envied* my happiness in having such a son. In the masquerade of life, how little we know of what we do envy!

"It was a quiet, still evening, and I had retired to my

chamber, after being as usual with my husband, until the hour when he went to rest. In two months more my son would be of age; and I looked forward to the time with an anxiety in which none but mothers can sympathize. I knew that he had cultivated his oratorical talents with more than usual care; and despite his faults, it was impossible to look upon his youthful demeanour without feelings of admiration. My thoughts passed rapidly over my former years; and, though I dreamed not of happiness, I dreamed of triumph. Again I triumphed in my son,—but my dream was disturbed at its commencement,—for Alfred, flushed with wine, and under strong excitement, rushed unannounced, into my chamber.

"'Mother!' he exclaimed; 'mother, I must have money. Money, and instantly, for here I cannot stay!' I looked on him, overcome by terror and anxiety, while he reiterated his demand for money.

"Why,—why need I dwell upon it? I discovered he had gambled. Again and again had he indulged in this dreadful propensity. The sums—the enormous sums—forwarded to Oxford for his authorized wants and desires, had been squandered away in profligate company. And then he came before me, reiterating his demand for money. He had been publicly arrested by a tradesman; and not only that, but scorned and scouted by his oldest companions for ———; but he deserved it all—all—not only for his want of conduct, but his want of candour. He placed no confidence in me,—me—his mother, who would have died to secure his honour; and now I was indebted to circumstances, not to himself, for the disclosure of his disgrace—disgrace!—black and bitter disgrace! But he did not feel it—that was but too evident.—He talked of his coming of age putting an end to his difficulties—rendering everything smooth—preventing his affairs spreading; and passed from purpose to purpose, from scheme to scheme, with a terrific rapidity. I saw that no time was to be lost. I found he had already been in the hands of money-lenders; and that even now he would have resorted to them, had it not been impossible for him to raise fresh funds without my consent. But I cared nothing for

the paltry gold. Of what value was it to me? And though the sum necessary was tremendous, I would have increased it tenfold, to prevent the possibility of the distress of a Montague gaining the public ear.

"The next morning the following paragraph met my eye in a conspicuous part of a fashionable journal :—

"'We understand that a certain scion of a noble house has been coolly looked upon at Oxford, as not fulfilling his pecuniary engagements, and neglecting his debts of honour. We regret this, more particularly, as we know it is his intention to start for the county after his coming of age. And we would remind those who are most severe in their animadversions on the gentleman in question, that there *may be*,—we do not say there *is*, we only say there *may be*,—a cause for his eccentricities, which we should deeply regret.'

"Here followed immediately, but apparently without connexion, another paragraph :—

"'We hear the Hon. E. Montague continues in excellent *bodily* health : this, under existing circumstances, is hardly to be desired.'

"Oh for the obscurity of the Smiths, and Browns, and Bungays! Who would have observed their 'eccentricities,' or cared for their 'existing circumstances,' or taken the pains to pen a paragraph to enlighten the world on their movements? But the vulgar love to hear and tell some new thing respecting the 'nobility ;'—they gape for, and swallow, all the falsehoods put forth as facts, of their frailties and their habits ; and whoever invents most, is, consequently, the most popular.

"How my heart bled at this fresh wound, and the tearing open of the old and rankling sore! Merciful Heaven! how many wounds are inflicted on a proud heart, which the humble-minded can never understand !

"I wished—yet dreaded—that my son should see this reference to him. I afterwards learnt that he had seen it, and laughed it to scorn.

"Whatever I might endure from repeated disappointments, I kept my feelings to myself. How have I prayed that my husband

had been spared, to direct by his wisdom, and render virtue still more lovely by example! How have I regretted my poor buried girl! Alas! alas! I felt more deeply every hour of my existence, the force of that text, which, like a knell, often rang mournfully on my heart – 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Yet I clung to it—to the pomp, and pageantry, and state. I clung to it, proudly—earnestly; and throwing aside my retired habits, I resolved to celebrate my son's coming of age with festivities; not at Montague House, for I could not support the idea of mirth and music in those halls where the poor maniac wandered! He, whose lamp *once* shone so brightly; it would have been an insult to his affliction to bring festivity within his dwelling. And yet it was necessary; no Montague, for centuries, had come of age unsung, uncelebrated. And the idea of such an event being unrecorded, would have confirmed all the reports circulated—and circulated but too truly, to his disadvantage. Totally reckless of what was said or thought, for nearly a month previous he was busied in arranging a series of fêtes and amusements for his birth-day: and I endeavoured to enter into those plans, and to argue myself into the belief, that now he would see the error of his ways, become careful of his society, and do as much credit to his name, by deeds of honour and charity, as his manners and personal beauty did to his descent.—It was a fallacious hope!

"At Alfred Park, another of our estates, were assembled the descendants of, as well as numbers of those, who, on a former occasion—then many years passed—assembled to celebrate my age of womanhood. Some I had not seen for years; and sufficient of woman's vanity rested round my heart to make me feel a hope that I was not so changed—so very much changed—as many I observed around me.

"We are so apt to compare ourselves with what we were a month—a week ago, that time works its furrows without our heeding its progress.

"The dinner and its attendant ball—a *bal masqué*,—passed off with much noise and ——— ; but I was not calculated to judge of its effects. My son spoke and acquitted himself so well that

while listening to the music of his voice—while contemplating the grace of his movements, the dignity of his address, and the purity, both in style and sentiment, of his eloquence—I forgot all—every thing—except that he was *my* son.

"Agreeably to a determination I had formed, of never sleeping from under the same roof that canopied, what I may too truly call my husband's *remains*, I got into my carriage as the morning dawned; and, just as the horses were setting off, a letter was thrown in at the window, which—God help me!—I read by the light of the blessed sun, before it was half risen.

"At the very time when the veins of my forehead were swelled to intense torture by the perusal of that unfortunate paper, the *élite* of three counties were discussing—my jewels—my equipage—and my happiness! I laughed convulsively as this thought crossed my mind; for I saw the impression my son had made on all, by the grace and suavity of his manners. Even those (and they were not a few) who had come prepared to dislike him, went away convinced that 'report' was a false liar, and that Alfred Montague was worthy of his name! I knew all this—and more. I knew that Alfred Montague was—what I dare not write—what I dare not, even now, though the grave has closed over my child; and though the fair hand that urged both by destitution and despair, traced those faint lines to me, in her extreme necessity, is a crumbling skeleton in the consecrated ground, which my charity, not his justice, bestowed—I dare not, though they are all one, think upon what I read that morning, while the beams of the rising sun pried through my crimson blinds! Oh, who would wish to be a mother, if they knew a mother's trials! But the worst was yet to come! I had to endure the laugh of contempt—the sneer—when I repeated to him the tale of distress created by his own depravity. I had to listen to the defence of a heartless libertine, and that libertine—my own son. I was forced, by my love of justice and of mercy, to visit the victim of his sin, to catch the last faint sighs of her departing breath, and to hear her pray—poor girl—that God would bless her destroyer, and save him from the wrath to come!

"Her devotion, her noble sentiments, her Christian fortitude, her pure charity, her freedom from selfishness, rendered her, in my estimation—poor pale departing flower that she was—fit mate for any noble in the land. Deception visits not the couch of death; it is no place for a bland smile—no refuge for pride—no temple for extravagance; there is a stern reality in the silent slumber, a truth in the sobbing breath; the pall may be of silver or of serge, but death, the same death, is beneath both. My little girl departed in a quiet sleep, and woke in heaven. But this woman was in the blossom of her beauty and her youth; and, though the spirit may bend to the decrees of the Almighty, yet the flesh will battle with the destroying angel—will struggle in his grasp. I witnessed her convulsions and her death! It was a small, a wretched room, and she was nearly starved; and I saw *his* last letter; it lay *upon* her heart; and, cruel as it was, she kissed it, ere she died. And in it he advised ——! Now may the Lord forgive him, for it was a foul insult to the faithful dove, who had left her parents' home, and braved the world, for him!

"The church clock of the neighbouring village struck nine. At this same hour, the previous night, I had been entranced by his eloquence. I had argued myself into the belief that his faults were venial; but before me lay the proof of cool and deliberate vice. She had suffered and sacrificed for him her good name; and yet he had, when tired of his victim, refused her even the means of existence. He did not think I would have sought her out; he thought me all too proud for such a course. He did not know his mother!

"I cut off a tress of the long black hair which swept round her like a shroud. I thought that *that* might move him. He was still my child, the child of my beloved husband; and if he did repent—if a single tear even stood in his eye—I could almost have forgiven him; for in him, my pride, my love, was but one feeling—he was my *only* child.

"I directed that everything should be done in a fitting manner for her burial: and I was descending the narrow stairs, when an aged man, travel-soiled and worn, stood at the door,

and asked some questions of the woman of the house. They were soon answered; and the old man staggered so impetuously up the creaking stairs, that I was obliged to re-enter the chamber of death.

"He gazed for a moment upon the pale corpse; and then, throwing from him his hat and staff, knelt by the side of the wretched bed, and buried his face in the streaming hair of what had been his child.

"Here was fresh agony for me! The father had become rigid and insensible, and it was nearly an hour before he recovered from a state of frightful torpor. He seemed ashamed of the emotion he had betrayed. His features, though venerable, were stern and harsh; his brow wrinkled; groans and tears struggled within his bosom; yet he would not let them forth. He looked at me—I almost thought suspiciously;—but when the woman of the cottage named my name (for I was too near my own neighbourhood to be concealed), the miserable parent burst forth into a torrent of reproaches upon mine, and me. He told me of my pride. He declared that on the only interview he had ever obtained with my son, after his daughter's destruction, he had said that it was his mother's pride alone that prevented his marrying 'Mary.' The afflicted man spoke in a harsh, suppressed, grating voice, grinding out his words, and then bursting forth his anger like a torrent over a rugged rock. I could not gainsay the opinion he had formed of Alfred. I could only for myself say, that I knew nought of the attachment.

"He knelt again; but it was to pronounce a curse—the curse of a desolate parent upon my wretched son. I was not too proud to supplicate—to implore him to restrain his imprecations. 'I will not commit murder,' he said; 'but I call to God for vengeance on the head of the destroyer. The law of man cannot attach his crime, but God can, and will, punish!'

"I trembled violently while he continued; the cold dew stood like hail upon my brow,—my blood curdled and crept slowly through my distended veins,—my tongue clave to my lips, as the curse of the desolate father mounted to the THRONE

of the Almighty. Again I supplicated. I was mad enough to offer gold to quell a parent's grief! 'And you, that are a mother, think gold can yield consolation to one bereaved like me!—to one, whose only child lies there! O Mary, Mary, why did you not return! I would not have chided. We would have prayed together as we used. We would have mingled tears at the footstool of the Lord, and I should once more have heard you murmur, Father! But now, Mary, my child, you are dead, and I am desolate!' A burst of natural grief succeeded, and I entered my splendid equipage with a bursting heart. O, misery unspeakable! I knew that old man's curse was registered in heaven, for it was deserved!

"As I entered the hall, I encountered a deputation, at that unseasonable hour, consisting of some of the principal persons of the county, who had come to announce to my son the sudden death of one of the members of the shire, and to request that he would immediately solicit the suffrages of the electors.

"I thought I should have sunk into the earth while receiving the compliments of those men. I crept to my chamber like a guilty thing; and, dismissing my attendants, desired my son's presence. I told him what I had witnessed. I dared not trust myself with reproaches, for, if I had, they would have known no bounds. He listened to my tale without emotion. I drew forth the silken braid of her beautiful hair. He grew pale—his lip quivered—his eyes filled with tears. Thank God! he was not entirely lost; for, though he expressed nothing, he was moved. Even as a drowning man grapples at a floating straw, so will a mother seize at any indication of mere humanity in a profligate child, as a symbol of returning virtue.

"A few days after this, my dear, my venerated husband, was, by an easy and painless transition, wafted to eternity. He regained his senses nearly two hours before his death. He called for me; yet, when I came, at first he knew me not. He had not traced the gradual changes in my face, and now they took him by surprise. Soon he was all him elf; - spoke of his illness —of Olympia's death, as things of recent date. But what was

most strange, never inquired for his son. This, in one respect, was happy; for he was absent, canvassing the county, soliciting the 'most sweet voices' of high and low, and leading the innocents of those days to believe that he was a miracle of patriotism and virtue. But this assumption did not pass with me; both my maternal love and my maternal pride had been blasted; and the curse, the fearful curse, still rang upon my ear.

"He behaved with tolerable decency on his father's death, which opened afresh the wounds I had received when first reason departed from him. I had often thought that I could have better supported his death than his intellectual prostration; but I was mistaken. The adage, 'While there is life, there is hope,' was most true in my case. While he was before me, I hoped, in the very jaws of despair; but the vault was now closed, and hope had indeed departed!

"My son was elected without opposition; and though there were many rumours afloat to his disadvantage, still, patronage and popularity—and above all, gold, worked their way. There was seldom more rioting, or more excess, committed in the neighbouring town, than on the day when he was declared representative of the county.

"I was sick at heart, and happy that my husband's recent death afforded sufficient reason for my remaining in strict seclusion. One of the windows of my chamber overlooked the park gates, and as the shouts of the half-drunken electors came madly on the air, I glanced for an instant over the scene—it was no delusion—there stood 'Mary's' father, leaning, like Jacob of old, on the 'top of his staff,' his eye fixed upon my window, while a smile of scorn and contempt curved his chiselled lip, and lighted his hollow eye with an expression most hard to bear. I was riveted to the spot. Some fools among the crowd espied me, and called for 'three cheers for the Noble Lady Elizabeth.' How I hated popularity! I hastened from the window, but yet continued long enough to see the old man lift his hat, in

mockery, from his head, while his hair streamed in the wind like the pennon of a phantom ship.

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"I remained too proud (my foes would say) to permit the world to know that any difference existed between my son and myself. He had now entered fully upon his political career; and though the party his ancestors, for a series of years, had invariably supported, were then out of power, still his eloquence commanded attention, and his steadiness to his friends, respect.

"The dignity of political consistency was then appreciated as it ought to be. Men—or *things* called men—were not whirled about by every blast of interest or wind of doctrine, to serve or bow to the mania of ill-grounded opinion. It was something to be a statesman in those days—I will not say what it is now, because political discussions are opposed to both the delicacy and dignity of a well-born woman. Enough for her that she venerates the Church and honours the King. This will sufficiently exercise her love and faith—a woman's best and dearest qualities. 'At least,' I argued with myself, 'the world knows nought of what so rankles in my heart, and even if it did——'

"Alfred Montague was dressed after, courted, flattered, worshipped. How little is the world acquainted with its idols—how little do we know what we admire! We imagine a deity, clothe it with our fancy, then fix upon some living temple for our creation to inhabit, and call it 'perfection.' Yet was I not insensible to the homage paid to my son. Next to deserving, there is nothing so sweet as receiving, praise; though I knew his moral hollowness, I clung to the belief that he was politically honest. And were it not for that old man's curse, I would have hoped—ay, hoped—for him for ever! What a blessed thing it is for humanity, that hope, like the fabled Phœnix, springs anew from its own ashes!

"I was one morning startled by the intelligence that Lord L—— wished to see me immediately. I well knew this sudden visit boded no good. He thought my son was at Montague

House. He was told so by his servants in town. Three nights he had been absent from the House, when questions interesting to his constituents were debated. He was looked for everywhere, and certain rumours had aroused Lord L——, who, from an old friendship subsisting between our families, as well as from other motives, watched my son's career with as much anxiety as if he had been his own. He came to me to inquire if he were wavering. I said I would stake my life on his integrity. He shook his head.

"I ordered my carriage, resolved to find my son, and know the truth at once. Had the party his father and all his family so long supported been in power, I could have forgiven his defalcation, but to desert their cause when his support was needed! Memory whispered that he *had* deserted a once dear object, when most she wanted his assistance. Ay, but his political honour, his fame, the disgrace!

"I arrived at four o'clock at Alfred Park. I learned there that my son had only left about an hour for town. 'Was any one with him?' 'Yes, it was one of the leading members of the administration.'

"My brain burned. I ordered fresh horses—post horses, and, without alighting, proceeded to London. It was night as we drove past Hyde Park Corner, and the rain pattered heavily against the carriage windows; the ponderous knocker echoed through the aristocratic silence of St. James's Square.

"'Mr. Montague had just gone down to the House. He had not set off three minutes.'

"'Was any one with him?'

"'Yes; the same cabinet minister who had been with him at Alfred Park!'

"I drove to the House of Commons, and was informed by the usher that Mr. Montague had not arrived, but that he doubtless soon would, as a very important motion was to be brought on by the opposition.

"While I was yet speaking, Alfred would have passed. I believe he did not know me. He *said* he did not. I went with him into one of the ante-rooms, and at once charged him with

dishonour and desertion. He endeavoured to avoid reply, and stammered forth something about change of times and prejudices, and all the jargon of those who find it convenient to desert their friends in their necessities. I argued, I entreated, I endeavoured to arouse his pride. I spoke to him of his father, of his family. I implored his attention. I pictured his falsehood, the scorn of his partisans, the contempt of his new friends. I talked of the virtues of those of ancient days, who had died to uphold the welfare of their country. I reminded him of the time when he used to sit upon my knee, and read of the heroes of old, whose religion was patriotism. I wept—positively wept—burning, scalding tears, into his bosom. And he promised—swore by all that was sacred in heaven and earth—that he would not swerve from his old party.

"I met Lord L——, and told him of my triumph. Nor was this all. I determined to ascend to the ventilator, and there exult in the disappointment of that 'dog in office,' who had tempted him to disgrace. There were a good many ladies in that elevated pest-room; but they made way for me, and I was stationed on the self-same spot, where, many years before, I had often listened to the sound—I may truly call it 'music'—of his father's voice. I know not who spoke, nor what was said. I only know how fatally I distinguished one person—one event.

"My son entered, in a state of intoxication, with his new 'leader,' took a seat behind the treasury bench, and, not satisfied with silent disgrace, spoke, aye, spoke (would that he had been born dumb!) against the principles of his ancestors. He spoke as well as he could speak under such circumstances, for his desertion and his intoxication were evident to the whole House. Groans from one side, and a species of half-applause from his new friends, were his reward—the only reward he obtained; for before the ratification of the appointment he was to receive as the recompence of his apostacy, his party went out of power, and Lord L——, our old and valued friend, was appointed premier.

"'I regret, dear Lady Elizabeth,' said this excellent man to me, 'that I cannot do as I would desire for your son.'

"'Sir,' I replied, 'the man who is *once* untrue to his party,

should never again be trusted. I desire none of my country's privileges for the unworthy scion of our once noble house.'

" As I am a born and living lady, I felt ashamed to return to Montague House. What could I say to the electors? How could I look, or speak, or act? Was I not an apostate's mother? Was not the finger of scorn everywhere pointed at 'Montague, the fool and the betrayer?' Was not the county in an uproar? Was he not obliged to accept the 'Chiltern Hundreds?' Did not the papers surfeit with lampoons, and the print shops with caricatures? And were there not many, *friends* they called themselves, who dared to send me those symbols of his disgrace, expressing their concern—their *pity* even—at 'what had occurred.'

" My grief was augmented, my degradation made more complete, by the contrast, so often forced upon me, of my son with my husband; the one, all probity, virtue, bravery, and soul-honour; the other, lost to all the loftier principles of nature, and utterly unworthy the high order to which he belonged.

" In the midst of all these realities, would come the remembrance of that poor, pale, skeleton girl, and her father's curse ringing in mine ears. And then, because of his unpopularity, the 'Oxford business' became the subject of county animadversion;—and—I went to Italy.

" Let no one desire children—let no one wish to have their quiver filled with those living arrows. I shall die childless—as a punishment for my pride. If great was my sin, great has been my tribulation.

" My son, too, went abroad, to blot out the memory of past offences by the committal of fresh faults:—and one night, at Naples, he was borne into my palazzo, killed, like a dog, in the streets, by some villain's stiletto, in a drunken brawl—the last of his line:—a creature of talent, of beauty, of extraordinary powers, yet wanting in those requisites which, I have observed, are often granted to those of much commoner capacity.

" It was night, and I heard the sound of many voices in the dissonant tones of drunkenness beneath my palace windows—and *his* voice among the rest—and a scuffle, and then all was still. Suddenly, a rush of men, a glare of lights, and my poor,

erring, sinful son, lay on the marble floor, the red blood oozing to my feet; and I kissed his lips, his brow, his cheek—for, oh, was he not my child!

"For several days I knew not what they did to him or me; but one night I heard a noise of nails and screws—and then it ceased—and the knowledge of the dread reality was with me. And when they slept, I stole into his chamber—the attendants *there* slept also—and the coffin was fastened down, covered with black velvet, decked with the solemn magnificence of woe. I knew that there he was at rest. REST!—did I say rest? God grant it! How blessed is repose after this world's turmoil!

"Now Heaven shield me from superstition! After I had remained awhile over that dismal sight, a thin and vapoury cloud arose at the coffin's foot; grey it was, as a mountain mist, and clear, for I saw the tapers burning through it, and the sleeping watchers in their repose. But there it stayed, gradually moulded by some unseen power, into the semblance of a human being, undefined, and yet distinct; it was a fearful creation, towering to the vaulted roof—a bloodless, colourless thing—fading, yet remaining, to my sight. And—Almighty Powers!—ere it vanished, it assumed the form and semblance of poor Mary's father!

"This was no dream. Alas! I was but too awake to misery!"

Here was another break in this "Tale of Woman's Trials," and I was thankful for it; for I had read enough of her misfortunes—many of which would not, perhaps, have happened to one less proud. I knew the rest; for I had often heard, that, on her return from Italy, it was feared that her reason had been impaired by the apostasy and death of her son. She never spoke of him; hardly ever alluded to "the past;" and though neither the present nor the future seemed to have any hope for her, they were more endurable than the memory of her life. She was unlike any of her associates; stately and cold, yet much given to the noblest acts of charity—a charity which usually concealed

the giver from the receiver. I often think of her as a beneficent and glorious relic of the olden time, and a living proof that no situation, however exalted, can shield us from the ills and turmoils of this state of existence, in which we are doomed to work our pilgrimage to another and a different world, where "sorrow and sighing shall be no more."

THE YOUNG PERSON.

UNDER any circumstances, "the young person" would have interested me much. She is of the middle size, slight and well-proportioned; her features are perfect in form, but wanting the moral development which freedom of thought and action gives to every face; *hers* have been tutored into subjection, consequently their invariable expression is that of patient, self-denying endurance. I have sometimes observed a smile relax her well formed mouth, but it was always followed by a half-born sigh; to sigh outright would be a luxury "the young pe son" does not dream of.

I was going to write as I feel, and call "the young person" my young friend; but the lady who considers her her own

especial property would never recognise her by that name. "The young person," then, moves so silently in, out, and about, that you never know when or how she comes or goes. She is never missed or inquired for, unless she is wanted; never considered as a being endowed with reason and feeling, except when her reason and feeling are necessary to the comforts and convenience of any individual of the dwelling—save herself.

The mistress looks upon her as a necessary evil; the master pulls off his coat and shoes while she is in the room; the children torment her, though they cannot help loving the thing they tease; the servants consider her a spy, and hold her up to contempt, because she wears "cast-clothes;" the lap-dog snarls if she puts her foot on the hearth-rug; perhaps the old house-dog is the only living thing that sympathises with her; *his* services, as well as *hers*, are forgotten; and the creature licks her hand; and while she "does up" the housekeeper's caps, sits with his head in her lap, and his almost sightless eyes fixed on her plaintive face.

You may recognise this "young person" in the street by her painful anxiety not to be observed, and to keep out of everybody's way; by her manifest desire to get whatever business she has on hand performed as quickly as possible. Her dress has so evidently seen better days, that you know she never had it when it was new. Her gloves have been carefully mended; and if the wind blows, you perceive that her stockings are darned above the shoe. The trimmings on her bonnet are faded; and it always happens that in summer "the young person" wears something belonging to the past season; while, in winter, instead of cloths, and furs, and velvets, she trembles in washed *mousselines* and *foulards*.

Shop-boys and attorneys' clerks look under her bonnet as she passes, and because she is alone, deem her a fit object for insult; but high-born gentlemen see an unprotected woman, and therefore consider her entitled to respect. The spirit of chivalry is not yet dead in England.

My particular specimen of this no-class, and yet numerous body, belongs to a family of consideration; consequently there is an air of humble dignity about her, which both fits and unfits her for her situation. It must not be imagined that only the rich and prosperous permit "young persons," like her whom I so

frequently think of, to move within their orbit; you see them in all grades of society, but, as I have said, acknowledged by none.

The green-grocer down the lane has one—a slip-shod, soiled-looking girl, with tawny plaits hanging down her cheeks, and tied by bits of black strings, that have not been untied for a week.

"Is that girl your daughter, Mrs. Green?"

"Oh, la! no, ma'am; my daughter's at the PIANAR, with Miss Grubb, the butcher's niece."

"Your servant, then?"

"No, ma'am; my servant never waits in the shop; she's only a '*young person*,'—a 'young person' Mr. Green likes me to have; nothing, ma'am, but a 'young person.'"

Probably in this sphere, as well as in other spheres of life, that hapless, helpless thing—a poor relation. Dressmakers invariably designate their pupils as "young persons;" and upon them all faults are placed. "I was not so fortunate, ma'am, as to take your pattern myself, and my forewoman was ill; so I sent a *young person* on whom I thought I could depend, but, oh dear!" and then the "young person," some lone and lovely girl, who has had but little opportunity as yet to learn how to "take a pattern," and who must be a slave until her talent enables her in her turn to become a tyrant, is sent for, and scolded, and insulted, until you forget the ill-fit in compassion to "the young person's" tears.

The governess to a family of the middle rank of society is sometimes happily circumstanced—that middle class in England has made a rapid stride in mental improvement during the last ten years; its mind has enlarged, its prejudices have decreased, it has gained an addition of true dignity; a little more, and it will not only be able to stand alone, but to *walk* alone: where to—is a matter I leave wiser heads than mine to determine; —in that class a governess is usually very well treated, but a "young person" is there almost as badly off as in any other grade of society. She is with it, but not of it; if she is asked to sing, the men of the family talk louder than they did when she was silent. She is expected to refuse jelly if there is but one shape on the table; to prefer cold meat to hot; and drumsticks

to wings; to laugh at the old gentleman's jokes, and never to dress like the young ladies—her hair I mean; of course she has no opportunity of wearing the same sort of clothes. She never dances but when required to make up a set; and it is an understood thing that when visitors come in, she is to go out Fortunately for herself, she is seldom of so refined a nature as the "young person" of whom I have already spoken; every other heart has its *green spots* upon which memory lingers—the ploughshare and the harrow have passed over hers.

I paid a visit the other morning where one of these "young persons" was sometimes seen dusting the ornaments, or copying music—nobody ever heard her play. The family consists of two daughters and a mother; a rich cousin, "cousin Edward," was an occasional visitor—the betrothed, it was whispered, of the elder of the young ladies. The footman looked perplexed as he opened the drawing-room door, and there was a painful flutter in mamma's manner while she desired "John" to tell the young ladies who their visitor was.

"You are a neighbour, and must have heard the news, of course."

"No, I have heard no news—I am a bad newsmonger."

"I really did not think the world was so wicked as it is," she commenced. "You knew that 'young person?'"

"I have caught a glimpse of a young lady."

"My dear madam, she was no young lady, she was only a 'young person;' the fact of it was, having her in the house at *all* was an indiscretion."

We both paused, and I began examining the trimming of my handkerchief, for the observation was "peculiar."

"Oh! nothing disgraceful—but not a stiver in the world had she."

"Her eyes were fine!"

"Ah!" she exclaimed, spitefully; "she was clear-sighted enough, not that we care at all about it; girls with ten thousand pounds each and expectations, have no need to go a-begging—only for the *honour* of the family, one does not like those sort of things to happen, and if *his* poor dear father could only look out of his grave and see—"

"See what!" I inquired.

"Why see his son, cousin Edward, married to a 'young person!'"

I certainly rejoiced at this poor girl's good fortune, which made me think, still more, of my too refined and susceptible favourite, whose lot has been far differently cast. A lady's-maid without the salary or the credit, amanuensis and reader, winder and worker of silks—to all appearance a mere automaton; yet gifted with a heart that *will* throb, a head that will ache—with knowledge and memory:—memory, the joy of the happy; but! oh, what was memory to *her*, the once cherished bird of those, whose eyes filled with love, whenever they named her name! When she is ill, and unable to rise from her bed; then, indeed, thoughts, like dreams, so crowd upon her, that for a time they bring back scenes and voices—gone from her for ever—*here*. Her young father, pale from study and fatigue, the curate of a large parish, teaching her, his cherished one, that learning, and that love, which is often rather a bane than a blessing to woman. A little music, a little French, some dancing, and a very little Italian, and she might have been a governess, finished young ladies in what she herself did not understand. But why did her father teach her the uncompromising dignity of truth? Why call things by those plain, unvarnished names of vice and virtue? Why draw the line between right and wrong with so firm a hand that she never could—never did—mistake the one for the other? Truly, that father must have been a man of most unworldly mind. And so he was; for in addition to this, he taught her the exceeding beauty in woman, of a submissive spirit. He taught it so well, that, looking clearly and steadily beyond this WORLD—its gauds, its paltry, unworthy ambitions, its child-like pageants, its gilded, yet decaying dross; looking not only above and beyond these, but beyond and above DEATH and the GRAVE—she, "the young person," in her lonely attic, is a happier, and far holier creature—oh! a thousand times—than the proud baroness she serves. When she recovers, and is able to come down again, she is very grateful for every look and word of kindness. She bears harshness at all times like a heroine, but tenderness overpowers her. Speak to her kindly, and tears overflow her cheeks

I think she is paler, more shadowy than ever, her eyes are bright, and there is a bright pink spot on either cheek, which bodes no good. And yet I never saw her look so happy as she did last Sunday evening as I came out of church. She was reading an inscription on a tomb-stone, setting forth, that the girl who was buried there had died young. "What a sweet quiet spot it is!" she said, looking round; "how very tranquil!—I should so like to be buried under that humble willow-tree, though I shall have no choice—have no one to choose for me!"

How glorious it is to see the power of *mind* overcoming all other influences; to witness the triumph of faith, to feel assured that no worldly circumstances can change or subdue the Soul! Nobody could dream of making the "young person" a heroine; but she is something better. When she reached the end of the church avenue, she turned to look back—the setting sun shone full upon her face, and it seemed bright as that of an angel. She will soon be one—I am sure of that.

"BEAR AND FORBEAR."

PART THE FIRST.

"JOSEPH, my dear," said Mrs. Smith to her husband, replacing her watch; Mr. Smith was reading in a very indolent-looking lounging chair, and took no notice whatever of the tender epithet that so lovingly glided from his fair lady's lips.

"My love," she said, and now a delicate ear could distinguish that her voice was raised a semitone higher than it was when

he said "my dear;" yet still Mr. Smith made no reply, though he wielded the paper-knife to accelerate his studies.

Mrs. Smith—Mrs. Joseph Smith, I should say—was as pretty and pettish a little lady as could be found between Hyde Park Corner and the noisy end of Sloane Street; and Mr. Joseph Smith was as dreamy and absent in mind and habits as his lady was irritable, "fussy," and particular. He was *very* absent, sometimes mistaking his wife's bonnet for his own hat—putting a white waistcoat over a black one—remembering everything, in fact, that ought to be forgotten, and forgetting everything that ought to be remembered—building castles in the air, and paying no attention, that he could possibly avoid, to the earthly castle (a gaily-furnished house) in which they resided. He was fond of reading, and fancied he understood moral philosophy.

"Joseph," said Mrs. Smith, and her voice was now so decidedly elevated, that the little spaniel, who was pretending to sleep on the hearth-rug, opened his eyes, yawned, and stretching himself, walked over to his mistress, who next, in a really angry tone, exclaimed. "Mr. Smith!" Still the reader made no reply; and the lady, after darting a look of bitter scorn at the insensible gentleman, flounced out of the room, "banging" the door, while the little fat spaniel stood looking after her in stupid astonishment.

Mr. Smith remained alone for about twenty minutes, quite unconscious of his lady's departure. At last, starting suddenly up from his book, he exclaimed, "My dear Lizzy, I have made great moral discovery, which, if acted upon, will revolutionise society. I cannot explain it to you just yet, but you may guess its magnitude and importance, when I tell you it will render mankind honest. They—— but are you there, my dear?" He walked to the bay window, where, half-shaded by the curtain, the lady generally sat, so that she could see, as she said, her work and the street, and whatever was going on in the room, at the same time; he then opened the drawing-room door, and called "Lizzy" and "my love" repeatedly; there was no answer; he rang the bell. "My mistress is gone out, sir," was the footman's reply.

"Did she leave any message for me?" "Not that I know of, sir."

"That will do," said Mr. Smith; and then he thought to himself, "it was very strange of her to go out without saying a word to me on the subject; and she knows we had agreed to go somewhere—I really forgot to find out where—together, and to be there exactly at two." He looked at his watch, and found that, having forgotten to wind it, it did not go; he then cast his eyes on the time-piece; *that*, being under Mrs. Smith's care, was clicking away merrily; it was then ten minutes after the appointed time. "Dear me," thought Mr. Smith, "I daresay she is gone to the appointment. How very odd that she should not have called me;" he repeated this several times to himself, for he was sadly perplexed at finding his wife quite out of the way when he wanted her; and when his habits and ideas were disturbed, he always continued fidgetty and uncomfortable until again chained down by reverting to some old, or commencing some new, dream. Starting, as if from the action of a galvanic battery, he caused the bell to ring a peal through the house. "Tell the cook," he said to the footman, "there are two gentlemen to dine here at seven." "Please, sir, my mistress ordered dinner at half-past five, as she said she was going to the theatre." "Very awkward," muttered Mr. Smith; "I remember she said something about *that;* but I thought it was to-morrow. However, it must be seven, and a proper dinner—fish, soup—you understand me?"

About five o'clock Mrs. Smith returned in high spirits; she had been to a delightful little concert—the engagement her absent husband had forgotten. Her apparently unaccountable absence had put him out of temper. "So," he said, "you are come back: and really, Elizabeth, I think it was very wrong of you to go out, and by yourself too, without saying a word to me, particularly as we were going to the Diorama, or some such place, together."

"Now, really, that is very cruel of you, Joseph," answered the lady, withdrawing the cheek she had held down for a kiss; "I called you four times, and you sat there like a stock or a stone, minding me no more than if *I* were a stock or a stone. I knew my cousin would be waiting for me; as the concert was early——"

"You know very well," interrupted her husband, "you never called me. Now, I remember I particularly wanted to go to a concert, and you knew it."

"You never told me so."

"Psha!" exclaimed Mr. Smith.

Mrs. Smith stamped her little foot as she rang the bell. Bells are ill-used things where there is much domestic contention; and now the wire reeved and cracked, and the tongue rattled violently within its brazen mouth. "Is dinner ready?" she inquired. The man looked at his master.

"No," said Mr. Smith, and there was much strength and decision in the little monosyllable. "Mr. Orepoint and Mr. Harrison dine here at seven. I remember having forgotten to tell you *that*, though I *did* tell you of my wish to go to the concert."

But Mrs. Smith made no retort touching the concert. She seemed petrified at something her husband had said, until at last she burst into tears, sobbing forth, she did not know what she had done, that he should insult her so. Mr. Smith looked astonished, and inquired what she meant; and she reminded him that Mr. Orepoint was "the man" who had jilted her poor sister Amelia; that it was impossible he (Mr. Smith) could have forgotten the circumstance, as he had heard it so often; and that, for her part, she would not stay in the house with such a wretch as Orepoint. The moment he came in, she would go out; she had made up her mind to *that*. The absent Mr. Smith was overwhelmed; the little resolution he indulged in, vanished. He remembered the circumstance when it was too late, reminded his wife of his forgetful habit, and said he "would do anything he could." Mrs. Smith dried her tears a little, and replied, that he must write and "say anything" to put Orepoint off; and then he found he had forgotten Mr. Orepoint's address.

Never was unfortunate husband in a greater fever of perplexity than Mr. Smith during the next hour and a-half. Finding that often as he addressed his wife, she in her turn made no reply, he went into his little dressing-room, with a vague idea that he had something to do. His reflection in the looking-glass reminded him that he was not dressed for dinner. He went through the

duties of the toilet with a perfect attention to what he was about, and was selecting from a cabinet a table snuff-box, which contained some peculiar snuff, when a loud double knock caused him to hasten down with the first box he met with in his hand, without taking another peep at his pretty little sulky wife; if he had, he would have found that her sulks were gone, and that she was preparing to do the honours of the house. Mrs. Smith was not in any degree husband-hunting for her sister Amelia; but it occurred to her that Mr. Orepoint would not have accepted the invitation, if he had not some desire to renew the intimacy that once existed between the families. He was still a *bon parti*, older by six years than when he jilted Amelia; and she thought Amelia had never loved any one so well since. Besides, Amelia had been a flirt; she knew that; and fancied her judgment on Mr. Orepoint was sudden. Nor did she like sitting for four or five hours by herself; and perhaps, after all, she had been more vexed at not going to the play than at Mr. Orepoint's coming to dinner. So just as Mr. Smith had finished an apology concerning her absence, she entered the room, and thus afforded fresh ground for displeasure. A little forbearance, and she could have made all smooth, but her pettishness was again in the ascendant. The dinner increased the formality, which the flirting Mr. Orepoint had it not in his power to assuage. In his difficulty of knowing what to talk about, he inquired after "her fair sister;" and Mrs. Smith, while her husband was describing to Mr. Harrison the proposed workings of his new moral theory, managed to draw him into a conversation as to old times, that was proceeding quite in accordance with her desire.

Just at that moment Mr. Smith, with the suddenness which characterised all his movements, asked Mr. Orepoint if he were particular in the flavour of his snuff, and Mr. Smith sent up his snuff-box; it had hardly glided over the snowy damask to its destination, when the mistaking Smith exclaimed, "Not that box, Mr. Orepoint; not *that*. Do me the favour to return it; that is not the one I intended."

"And why not?" replied the bland gentleman; "why not? Here is a charming likeness of your lady and her sister, most

exquisitely painted, and superbly set, the beauty of the one doing justice to the beauty of the other."

"Ah!" said the absent man, "I thought it might revive the memory of——" Mrs. Smith, by a sudden effort, managed to interrupt the rest of the sentence. Mr. Smith rallied, but was again stopped by a timely interruption. "Mr. Smith, you are throwing your walnut shells on the carpet, and they crush into it and cut it so, that I must beg you to be more careful."

"I declare most solemnly," said the husband, "I have not cracked a single walnut yet; I was only twisting the nut-crackers."

"You say anything to gain your point." muttered the lady, but not so low as to escape her husband's ear, who—like the animals in the menageries, when "poked up" that they may waken and show off their nature. such as it is—was on the *qui vive* for an attack. Without waiting for a reply, she rose from her seat, and in leaving the table, had the address to carry off, unnoticed, the unfortunate box to her own apartment.

It was a damp, drizzling evening, and the church clocks had just "gone" a quarter past ten, when a carriage stopped at the door of a handsome house in one of the gorgeous streets that have arisen out of the damps and ditches of the "Five Fields." From this carriage Mrs. Joseph Smith alighted, and rushing up her cousin Mrs. Mansfield's stairs, did not wait for the servant's announcement. The lady whom she sought, after her day's ill-managed fever, was very different in character and conduct from the petted pettish little creature who, full of bitterness and vexation, flew to her for the advice she persuaded herself she required from "her dear Madeline;" but pretty Mrs. Smith always made up her mind—not a very large thing to make up—and acted upon her resolve, before she took counsel at all.

Mrs. Mansfield was sitting in her splendid drawing-room alone; her embroidery frame stood beside her chair; and the bright and dead gold she was working into a satin scarf for her husband glittered beneath the light of the beautiful lamp, that shone without dazzling or disturbing the stately character of the apartment. "Oh!" she exclaimed, as she rose to meet her

cousin—"oh! your knock set my heart beating; I thought it was Edward."

"What!" inquired Elizabeth, "has he not been home since the concert? He told you to wait dinner."

"So I did until half-past seven; but he does not wish me to wait beyond that."

"Then," exclaimed Mrs. Smith, "if he did not wish me to wait, that's the very reason I would wait; if he served me as he has been serving you these six years, the un——"

"Hush, Elizabeth," said her cousin; and her "hush" was decisive, both from its tone and the expression that accompanied it "I allow no one to cast reflections on my husband. Pray, sit down, and tell me what fresh annoyance has brought you here this evening? You told me of your great trouble this morning; how that my good friend Joseph would not answer when spoken to. As you have known that habit as long as you have known him, I was somewhat astonished at your making a complaint of it now; and I told you to resort to your old practice, and jog his elbow; Joseph will feel the shake when he does not hear the words."

"Well, and so I did when I went home; but he was as rude as a bear; insisted that he wished to have been at the concert, and had told me so, which he never did."

"He thought he had, and that should have made you endure the assertion. You know he is quite incapable of intended falsehood."

"I cannot describe his conduct. He invited that Mr. Orepoint with Harrison to dinner, and he knew I was going to the play."

"He forgot it," murmured Mrs. Mansfield.

"Orepoint, who behaved so ill to Amelia," continued Mrs. Smith; "and I refused to meet him at dinner; and then I thought better of it, and dressed and came down; and instead of being grateful for my doing so, Smith looked thunders when I entered the drawing-room."

"One kind word from you would have smoothed it all; but you are so touchy, that instead of forbearing, you said something rude or odd," observed Madeline.

"I said nothing to *him*, at all events," she continued. "He knows I am hasty."

"Granted: and you know he is absent."

"My goodness, Madeline! you speak as if all the duty was on one side."

"Not at all; the truest and only rule to render married life happy—the law, divine as well as moral, 'BEAR AND FORBEAR.' is imperative on both."

"Then it should be practised by both," said Lizzy.

"Granted most fully," answered her cousin; "and in your case it is simply because it is practised by neither, that you spend your days loitering about the straws of life."

"How you talk, Madeline. Straws, indeed! Would you believe it—he was going to tell the strange odd-sounding story of the foreigner who painted Amelia's miniature and mine on the box, whom we believed to be a count, and—a—desirable person; in short, one who might have done for Amelia, and how we found him out. Well, he was absolutely going to tell the whole of that to Orepoint, and before Harrison, too, who is a sort of patent reporter."

"Oh, you could have turned the conversation," said Madeline.

"My dear, I tried; but it only made matters worse."

"How unfortunate! Well, my motto, remember, is 'Bear and Forbear.' You know what I have often told you, that I never knew a matrimonial quarrel where *all* the wrong was on one side."

"But, Madeline," exclaimed Mrs. Smith, "it's all very well for the woman to forbear, if the man will bear, or *vice versa;* but I cannot understand why a woman is to be trampled on."

"Nor I; if a woman perform her duty, she *cannot* be trampled on. There is no mention in the marriage ceremonial of a wife's being obedient *if* the husband be affectionate, or of the husband's protecting and cherishing *if* the wife be obedient. No matter how the husband performs his portion of the compact, the wife is bound to perform hers."

"The men ought to be mightily obliged to you," said Mrs. Smith, sarcastically.

"Not so much as the women," answered Madeline. "I love to see a woman treading the high and holy path of duty, unblinded by the sunshine, unscared by the storm. There are hundreds who do so from the cradle to the grave—heroines of endurance, of whom the world has never heard, but whose names"—and, carried away by the enthusiasm of the feeling, she clasped her hands together—"but whose names will be bright hereafter, even beside the brightness of angels. Lizzy, it grieves me to see you frittering away your happiness. You are married to a man without faults—generous, faithful, and wonderfully patient; domestic, and yet leaving you mistress of your house and actions."

"When he prevents my going to the play, and insults me at a horrid seven o'clock dinner!" thrust in poor Mrs. Smith.

"Oh, nonsense, dearest; mere fibres upon which to hang a quarrel; he has heaps of peculiarities, I know; and you have only to laugh and humour them, as you used to do about two years ago, to be as happy as a summer day is long; but *beware!* if you get into a quarrelling habit, he will do the same; a straw has a tube large enough to contain gunpowder: a few more such quarrels as that which must have occurred to drive you at this hour from your house, when you ought to be in your drawing-room, would destroy the happiness of any home. Go back, tell him you are sorry for the quarrel, and never mind whether he says, or does not say, *he* is sorry; but don't strive to find out who began it, or who did not. You *are* sorry for the quarrel, are you not?" There was an increase of pout, but no reply. "Elizabeth, I am older, and you say wiser than you; do not, I entreat you, thrust your happiness from you; if you do so in the days of your early marriage, you may hunt after it in vain. It is a foolish saying that the quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love; but this I tell you, wedded quarrels are the knell of love. Go home, dearest cousin; forget your offended dignity; remember how tender your husband has been to you in sickness; recall not how much of your waywardness he has resented, but how much he has endured; think how he provided for your brother, and his liberality to your family—these are great things to set against small vexations. The idea of quarrelling with a

husband because he sometimes has a little mental wandering, and does not immediately hear what you say, or because he drops walnut shells on the carpet, is really too absurd. Go home, my dear, like a good wife, and think no more of this nonsense."

Mrs. Mansfield was now ALONE, and alone she remained, until the chimes of the time-piece arrested her attention—it was a quarter past one. She rang the bell, directed the footman to desire her maid to go to bed, and ordered that all the servants should retire. In a few minutes an old and faithful domestic, who had attended Mr. Mansfield from his boyhood, and was now half-valet, half-steward, entered the room, and told his mistress that he hoped she did not mean him to go to bed. "I've sat up many a night for my master, and for his father before him," said the man, "and never rose the later for it; and I hope you will let me wait now as well as ever. I am sure, late or early, I am never tired. The air is cold, and it looks—I beg your pardon for saying so -- strange to the other servants for their mistress to open the door: I will only do *that*, ma'am. I wish I could do anything to show my gratitude for those who have done so much for me." Incidents sometimes occur at war with all forms, that touch the heart deeply; there was so much kindness and delicacy in these few words, that Madeline thanked Lewis, and told him he might wait up if he pleased. Mr. Mansfield was a man of station, wealth—or reputed wealth—and talents—the peculiar talents so much admired in society; his humour was buoyant, graceful, and accompanied by a constitutional good temper, that cheered others while it was refreshing to himself; but with all his accomplishments, he had one serious fault—in his character there was no stability; his good resolutions melted away before the first temptation, and his want of fixed principles rendered him the easy captive of the last passion or the last speaker. He was so courted abroad, that if his home had been neglected, or his wife other than she was, he would never have been seen at his own house. Mrs. Mansfield, loving her husband with more than the usual love even of woman, had latterly entertained the ambition of being her husband's *friend;* to accomplish this, she sacrificed all small feelings, stifled at their birth all petty, or

what many women would consider anything but petty, grievances, and determined to watch and wait for an opportunity to withdraw him from the vortex of fashion, folly, and, it might be, worse, into which he was plunged.

She had observed lately that her husband shunned her more than usual. He avoided their being alone, though he treated her with more than usual tenderness. He was connected, she knew, with many speculations; and she had heard of the failure of one or two houses, whose principals frequently dined at their table. She knew that he had lost at Epsom, but of *that* they had spoken. Mrs. Mansfield was too wise to set herself against her husband's amusements. In reality, nothing could give him pleasure without interesting her; and besides, she dreaded the coldness which so frequently arises in wedded life from the wife playing the monitor instead of the companion—the former destroying, the latter promoting, that interchange of feelings and opinions beneficial to both husband and wife. She watched for his return on this particular night with more than her usual anxiety; she had ample cause for this and other sensations. She was less composed than she thought she had ever been before,—had less command over herself; and thus it was she wished to have *felt* that every eye in the house was closed, every ear deaf, except her own, when he returned. At last, when another and another hour had passed into eternity, she lit a taper, and stole silently, as mothers steal, into the nursery. Her boy was not asleep; his hands were hot and feverish; and when he saw her, he sprang up in his little bed, and clasped his arms round her neck. "I cannot sleep, mamma, I am so hot and thirsty; but I did not like to waken nurse. Take me into your cold room, mamma, do, dear mamma, and I will not wake papa; you see I did not wake nurse." Madeline was delighted with the child's consideration, and, alarmed at his evident illness, she carried him into her room, and laid him on the bed, while she found him something to drink. "Where is papa?" inquired the boy; "the stars are going out, and the sky will soon be red before the sun gets up. Where is papa?"

A loud knock replied to the boy's question; the child drank

eagerly; and Mrs. Mansfield was hastening across the staircase with him in her arms, when her husband, rushing up-stairs, called to her to stop. Mr. Mansfield was far too refined to yield to a habit of intoxication, but he was then unsteady from the effects of wine.

"Is Charles ill?" he inquired.

"He is a little hot and feverish, dear Mansfield," replied his mother; "and I think the nursery is too close: he will be better for this little change of air."

Mr. Mansfield stooped to kiss him. "It is you who are hot, I think," said the child, peevishly, putting up his little hand to push away his father's face; "your breath is *so* hot—there, don't kiss me any more." And he nestled his head on his mother's shoulder.

Mr. Mansfield scowled upon both, as Madeline had never seen him do before. "The child has been taught that," he said, bitterly.

Madeline raised her eyes to his; she made no reply, nor did a reproachful expression rest upon her features. Their eyes met; it would be impossible to describe her look, so clear, so full of truth. There was evidently a struggle in her husband's mind between his real nature and the occurrences and habits of the time; but his better angel triumphed. He kissed her cheek: she made no allusion to the injustice of his words, but returned his caress as affectionately as if they had not been spoken.

PART THE SECOND.

REMARKABLE for early rising Mrs. Joseph Smith never was; and on the morning after the incidents we have related, she did not descend to the breakfast-table till her husband had half finished his breakfast.

"You had better ring, my dear," he said, "and have some fresh tea made."

"You know I never take tea. Now, when did you ever see me take tea? You are so very forgetful; you know I always take chocolate."

"So much the better, my love," replied the good-tempered husband; "for then my being obliged to hurry into town will not inconvenience you."

"It is very disagreeable to breakfast alone," she muttered.

"Then you might rise earlier," he said, quietly. Mrs. Smith opened wide her bright round eyes. Mr. Smith followed up the stroke bravely. "No household was ever well managed where the mistress lies in bed till noon" The poor man was fearful he had gone too far, said too much, hurt her feelings; and as he really loved the pretty fool, who seemed to lack the instinctive knowledge of caring for her own happiness, he paused, and added, "Surely, my love, illness cannot be your excuse, for in all my life I never saw you look better than you do at this moment."

"Look better?" repeated the little lady—"look better! So much for man's consistency of opinion. Why, look at this dress; you always said this dress disfigured me—that you hated it: that was the reason why I put it on this morning; and now you say I am looking well."

"A proof you look well in everything, my dear," said Mr. Smith, tapping his second egg.

"You are breaking that egg at the wrong end, Mr. Smith," recommenced the provoking wife; "it is very odd you cannot remember that the round end is *the* end to break an egg. Well, it is strange: you know how these little things annoy me, yet you persist in doing them."

Mr. Smith restrained himself, for peace' sake; but he continued breaking the egg at the sharp end; and having eaten it, rang the bell. "Do not forget to stop the omnibus," he said to the servant.

"The 'buss you go by, sir, to the city, has been gone an hour. I told you the time, sir, while you were reading," replied the servant.

Mr. Smith was provoked, perhaps, with himself; but he looked first at the servant, and then at his wife, who was dividing her toast into very small particles, and throwing it at the little spaniel. "Well," she exclaimed, "*that* was not my fault, I'm sure. I had nothing to do with your delay."

"I did not say you had, Mrs. Smith," he answered.

"No, but you looked—you looked, sir!" Then, with a per-

fect change of voice, she whined out, "God help us poor women! We little know what we may live to endure!"

"Stuff!" murmured the angry gentleman, drawing on his gloves, and marching out of the room.

Mrs. Smith poised her spoon over her cup of chocolate. "He will hardly go," she thought, "without saying good-bye; he never did *that* yet." She listened, and certainly the hall-door did not either open or shut. His step paused—it returned—a smile of petty triumph agitated her lips. No, he went up stairs. The smile, however, increased, for she knew he would look in as he came down. He did look in.

"Can I do anything in the city for you?"

Mrs. Smith sipped her chocolate, as if unconscious of her husband's presence or his words.

"Elizabeth, do you want anything from the city?"

"If I did, you would forget to bring it."

"Well, perhaps so. I shall be home to dinner at five."

"I wish—though I suppose it is little use *my* wishing—but I *do* wish that you would sometimes dine at the club. Now, last night, if you had invited *those men* to dine with you at the club, you would have enjoyed yourself more, and I should not have felt the poor castaway I did." Mrs. Smith intended this as a bit of touching eloquence, but she had undermined her own influence by a system of annoyance which some women fancy augments, when it really destroys, their power.

"Are you in earnest?" inquired Mr. Smith, advancing into the room, and looking steadfastly at his wife; "are you in earnest in saying that you wish I would dine at the club?"

"Why, yes; you would get better dinners there; and you are hard to please in that way;" and she looked down at her chocolate with a pretty mincing expression of countenance.

"Very well, Elizabeth," he replied; "I will dine there to-day. It is at your request; my memory will be clear enough to remember *that;*" and without another word, he left the house, and his lady to the exercise of her temper and imagination. While Elizabeth Smith was thinking her small thoughts, and arranging her small ways, Madeline Mansfield was seated by

her husband's side; his face was turned from her, so as to conceal what he did not wish her to observe.

"What you say, Madeline," he answered at last to much that she had spoken, "what you say is true; I grant you that; but it is impossible. If I were to change my style of living, it would be talked of at the clubs, where things small, as well as things great, are canvassed, the one with as much eagerness as the other. My credit would be shaken."

"It is shaken already, Mansfield," she interrupted. "Now do not shrink from or shudder at it; I know it is shaken. If it were not, do you think I should have heard it? But shrinking will not re-establish it, nor will bravado; difficulties must be encountered to be overcome. I am sure," she added, with admirable tact, "I have heard you say so many times—be they as bad as they can be, they must be met."

"You are going out of your usual track," said her husband in a severe voice, and evidently anxious to escape from her and from himself.

"I am doing," she replied, "as I have ever done; I am following in yours. I have shared your heart, Mansfield, and your prosperity; and if adversity——"

"Why," he interrupted—"why say *if* adversity? Madeline, you are a very raven this morning. Who dared to speak of adversity? It *cannot* come. Your marriage settlement would protect you and our child. Adversity!—like all women, you speak as if a temporary inconvenience were decided ruin. *Who* has dared to bandy my name in this manner?" He rose from his chair, and seizing his hat, would have left the room, had not his wife prevented him.

"You will not hear me, Mansfield, will not confide in me but although you do not know me, you believe in me. You know I would not breathe, much less tell, an untruth. I will not detain you: only this, whatever may occur, there is my settlement to prop your credit. I can live and rejoice in poverty, but I could not bear your tarnished name. Do not hesitate to consider *mine*, in every sense of the word, *yours*. If

you would only allow me, there are a thousand things I could retrench in."

Mr. Mansfield looked at her steadily, and then said, "Would you consent to relinquish this house?"

"Most willingly – house, carriage, all—go to a suburban cottage at once. There would be nothing strange in *that*. I have been ill, and need change, and pure air, and quiet. Indeed that would be no sacrifice," was her reply, in a cheerful voice.

"Would you take our boy and go abroad," he persisted, "for two or three years?"

Madeline's colour came and went rapidly. "Without you?" she faltered.

"Certainly—there would be nothing strange in *your* going abroad; the boy would improve rapidly in languages: and you would (if the crisis came which you consider so inevitable) avoid much pain."

"Mansfield!" exclaimed Madeline, panting in her utterance, "why will you speak thus, as if *we* could have a divided interest? I could not, I do not want to avoid pain. Even if I loved you not, the sacred bond that binds us would prevent it. Anything but that, Mansfield;" and she added, while a faint smile struggled on her lips, "I am sure you did not mean it."

"We have met so seldom of late," he answered, "that I should not think you could feel it so much." He did not venture to look at his wife after these cold words; if he had, his heart, always movable, must have turned with love and sympathy towards the struggling agony she sought to repress. And it was her agony alone she strove to overcome. No desire to return pain for pain arose from her generous heart; nor had she occasion, in this great sorrow, to resort to the talismanic proverb which had so often taught her, on less trying occasions, to "forbear."

"We have met seldom, certainly," she said, and the composure of her manner and the trembling of her voice were at sad variance; "and I confess that I have suffered much in consequence; but I knew, day by day, that you were well; I knew you were amused. If I did not always see you, I heard your voice

or your step; and if you did not come, I could still expect you: but I cannot leave you. I have never been officious—never craved for attention, highly as I value it—never, never disturbed your arrangements, or pushed myself into secrets it would have given you pain to have revealed. Oh, Mansfield! let what will happen, do not thrust me from you.' The idea of parting from her husband overcame every other feeling; and her deep and earnest love, of which Mansfield felt he was everyway unworthy, recalled much of his past affection. He left her with the assurance of attending to her wishes, of steadily investigating his affairs, of looking all difficulties in the face boldly and at once, and above all, promising never to hint even at the idea of their separation again. All this, and more, he promised, and all this he intended at the moment to perform; but when his cab drove from the door, Madeline felt the oak upon which she leaned changing into a reed; for all her love could not blind her to the fact of Mansfield's vacillation. It was well that she had the truest Comforter to resort to. She knew that a married woman ought to have no friend, in the highest acceptation of the word—no one to whom she can open her heart fully and entirely—except her husband. Her mother was dead, and her only near relative—a warm-hearted old bachelor uncle—Uncle Oliver—had all the confidence she deemed it right to give to any; but she had no thought of complaining of her husband to any human being.

Before the sound of Mr. Mansfield's wheels had died on his wife's ears, her faith in his promises was gone. It was in vain she recalled them; and the experience of the days and weeks that followed, only proved the total want of firmness of purpose in him she loved.

Instead of retrenching, he seemed to rush more wildly than ever he had done before through the whirl of the world; and her inquiries were avoided with a wild burst of gaiety, or some bitter words, that were replied to only by unseen tears. She frequently blamed herself for not more firmly withstanding what she considered wrong; but her position was one of extreme difficulty. If she were sure of her husband's affec-

tion, she would have been better able to stem the destruction, whose course she watched as the devoted villagers watch the stream of lava that must overwhelm them in the end. Sometimes his mad gaiety would flash like a meteor through the house; at others he was so moody, so reserved, so evidently in a state of mental and bodily suffering, that all she could do was to attend to and console him; and this he would not always permit.

She was watching for him one night—longing for, yet dreading the knock that would announce his arrival—when the servant brought her a letter, a few hurried lines, saying he was suddenly called by business to Antwerp, but she should hear from him in a few days. A line at the bottom of the scrawl implored Heaven to bless her and her child. The next day passed. She told her servant she would not be at home to any one. She might have spared the command, for no one called; it was a damp, misty, chilling day; the fog entered the drawing-room; and spread its hazy curtain over the looking-glasses, and mirrors, and windows, and crept about the marble tables and bronzes, making them feel clammy to the touch.

The following day was bright, and full of sunshine: she ordered her carriage, and drove into the Park. She was seeking refuge from herself. She bowed eagerly to all she knew, and her salutations were always respectfully and warmly returned; but she thought people seemed astonished to see her there. *Why*, she could not tell, but she pulled the check, and said "Home." Her uncle was in the drawing-room: she saw his face at the windows where she had looked expecting to see her boy; but before she was on the stairs, the old gentleman met her—nay more, he kissed her, and led her into the library. There was something so melancholy in his eyes as he gazed on her, that she felt suffocated; and unclasping her cloak, and throwing back her bonnet, she said, as calmly as she could—"You have something more, dear uncle, than mere town talk to tell me to-day. Is Mansfield ill?"

"The rascal!" exclaimed Uncle Oliver; "the most desperate rascal!"

"You are sure he is not ill?" she persisted, greatly relieved, and for a moment losing sight of the injurious epithet, in her deep anxiety for him she loved.

"Ill!—not he—such rascals are never ill."

"Thank God!" she ejaculated; and covering her face with her hands, sobbed bitterly for a few moments.

"I wish," thought Uncle Oliver, as he paced up and down the room; "I wish I knew exactly what I ought to say, and what I ought to do. With any other woman, the difficulty would be how to keep her down; but with her, it will be how to get her up."

"Don't cry, Madeline; don't cry," he said at last; "I am sure the involvements are greatly exaggerated; and, after all, there is not so much to regret, for he was never at home; so cheer up, my dear niece. I should be as happy as a prince," he muttered to himself, "quite, if she would only call him a rascal."

"Whatever there is to tell," she said, "tell me now; I can bear it. I would not seek any whom we know, lest I should hear ill of him. I dreaded lest some one should come and tell me evil; but I do not mind you—I never minded you, Uncle Oliver."

The old man looked sadly perplexed; he did not know how to say what he felt he must communicate. He began by talking of Mr. Mansfield's embarrassments, and follies, and extravagances. Of all these, Madeline assured him, he might spare himself the mention: she knew all. Yes, she believed every one, and she thought she saw a clear and direct way to avert the disgrace, though not the ruin. Her relative looked astonished.

"Then you know," he inquired, "the cause of his journey; do you not?"

"Business, uncle, I suppose; business," was her answer.

"Most villanous business," he said. "Have you had no suspicion that he loved you less than formerly?—have you had no reason to believe why?"

Madeline grew deadly pale. "It cannot be, uncle," she said,

"that you come to me, in this hour of trial, to insult me by the gossiping reports of the town?"

He placed a letter in her hands; it was directed to him from her husband, signed by his name, entreating him to go at once to "poor Madeline," and cursing his evil destiny. It left no doubt as to who was the companion of his flight; no doubt as to his having violated the laws of God and man. Madeline folded up the letter deliberately, but, in the act of returning it to her uncle, she fell on the floor. There was neither scream nor tear; she fell as one struck off the life-roll into eternity. When she recovered her reason, she asked if Mr. Oliver were in the house. He was soon by her side; but, contrary to his expectations, contrary to his hopes, deep and bitter as were Mrs. Mansfield's feelings, no word of censure towards her husband escaped her lips.

"I am not able to think yet," she said; "I can only *feel;* but to-morrow I shall be better. Come to me to-morrow at two, and pray for me, dear uncle; I need the prayers of the good and gracious creatures of the world."

The poor old gentleman brushed many tears away from his furrowed cheeks, and drove immediately to those who could give him information as to the real state of Mansfield's affairs. He found they were by no means in so bad a state as he had heard at first; that if the heedless man had possessed the moral courage to investigate them steadily, some outlay at the present, and retrenchment for the future, would bring them round. But it was in vain he sought to discover what spell could have deprived Mansfield of his reason, and tempted him to outrage all honour as he had done; indeed, Mr. Oliver was so incensed at Mansfield, that he seemed to retain only what told most against him. And what was there that did *not* tell against him? That a foreigner, whose code of morals falls far short of our English standard, and whose profession extracts the blush from the purest cheek, that braves the glare of footlights and men's eyes - that such a one should have admired the gay, the witty, the handsome Mansfield, was no wonder. She had no position to sacrifice, no

scruple to overcome; but that *he* should have been so infatuated, was past all understanding. The next morning, although he was rather before than after his appointment, Mrs. Mansfield had been in consultation for some hours with her husband's "man of business."

When Mrs. Mansfield rose to meet her uncle, he was shocked at the change which a few hours had wrought; but she was perfectly calm, and the lofty purpose that filled her mind imparted a more than usual dignity to her manner. She left the room to procure some papers, and the lawyer, addressing her uncle, said, "Her going out, sir, is a relief to me. I never understood what woman could do before. She gives up the *whole* of her own property—the *whole*, sir, without reserve, to free her husband; and this, mind you, *unconditionally*. She is devoted, heart and soul, to save *his* credit—never thinks of the privations, or the loss of position, or the confined means, which such a voluntary sacrifice will oblige them to submit to for some years."

"Nor of her child?" questioned the old gentleman.

"I spoke of him," was the reply, "and she said the proudest event of her life was being able to save his father's name from reproach"

"Her head is *not* cool!" exclaimed her uncle. "No woman's head can be cool whose life has been but one entire sacrifice to an ungrateful rascal, working up her maxim of 'bear and forbear' until it brings——"

"Peace in the end, believe me," added Madeline, who had returned unperceived by her uncle. "Believe me, for whatever I suffer, I shall be greatly rewarded—rewarded as women deserve to be, when they do their duty."

"Duty!" repeated Uncle Oliver—"duty! Stuff! A scoundrel, to desert——"

"Uncle, uncle," interposed Madeline; "this house is his—I am his wife; and before me no one—not even you, who are my nearest and dearest kinsman—not even *you*—shall utter one disrespectful word of my husband."

The lawyer thought it better to withdraw, promising to do

everything that could be done, and to see her again as soon as possible. Uncle Oliver remonstrated, and stormed, or tried to storm; but his anger dissolved under the influence of her gentle words. She could not, indeed, trust herself to name her husband's name; but she spoke of what a happy thing it was that she could do so much; and she entreated her uncle to bear with her if he loved her, and to believe that she should yet be very happy—and here tears denied the assertion of her lips—and she would have said a great deal more perhaps, avoiding, yet returning to, the subject of her sorrow, but she heard Mrs. Joseph Smith's voice upon the stairs, and hastily retired into another room.

Mrs. Smith hoped her cousin would see her. How sorry she was; every one said how it would be from the first, with her yielding quiet way, suffering herself to be trampled on, grudging herself every little indulgence, while for gloves and flowers alone Mr. Mansfield squandered in one day upon "the creature" eight-and-thirty pounds. *She* would take care not to be such a patient fool; and so ran on the little lady, repeating all, or at least all she had heard of, the *on dits* of the town, concerning what, fresh as it was at that moment, would never extend to a nine days' wonder.

Now, Uncle Oliver could find fault with Mrs. Mansfield himself, and say more than Lizzy had ventured to say, but he would suffer no one else to do so. He told her that if the town talked of Madeline's forbearance, they would never have an opportunity of talking of *hers;* and that she was more inclined, if "the town" said truly, to emulate the gentleman than the lady. He read her a long lecture; told her she had cast God's goodness from her; and ended by offering to see her home, "where she would," he added, "do well to remain more constantly, except when escorted thence by her husband."

Indeed, it was painful to see how the easy quiet nature of Mr. Smith, disturbed out of its usual course by the perpetual annoyances of a silly wife, sought the comfortable refuge of his gilded club, "soaking" away existence, and becoming more and more

attached to the creature-comforts, as opposed to the INTELLECTUAL—of which clubs are not the nurseries. He became, perhaps, on the whole, as little inclined to bear as she was to forbear; in all domestic matters, instead of drawing together, running full tilt against each other; sometimes with only straws, it is true, but still opposed. Mrs. Smith was ever whining about her husband's continual absence from home; and when he did come, he more than once expressed his displeasure, of course at the wrong time, at Mr. Orepoint's being installed "as the friend of the family." The world began to talk—the ladies, of course, finding fault with the woman, and the gentlemen laughing at both. In this war, commenced of nothing, the happiness of both was wrecked.

After a few weeks had passed, Uncle Oliver received an unexpected letter from Mrs. Mansfield. She expressed much gratitude to him for the affectionate tenderness he evinced towards her, and continued:

"Finding that my husband will not return to England, yet that we must together sign various papers, so as to realize a sufficient sum of money to discharge all that is necessary, I have determined to go at once to Paris, where I find he is, and let the lawyers meet *us* (perhaps I should write *me*) there. Is it not unaccountably strange, my dear uncle, that he should persist in refusing to 'rob' *me*, as he calls it, when in reality the only jewel I prized—himself—is gone? Independent of all business motives, I feel it is my duty to endeavour to win him back. I cannot hope that the love which deserted me, when I was still what he once admired, will return; but I know that my devotion, and desire to make him happy, may withdraw him from what, sooner or later, must bring its punishment. In this great trial I have some consolation. I cannot call to mind having ever driven him from home by any disturbing or fretful conduct: my exceeding love for him made my enjoyment so perfect, that, whatever cause I might have for discontent, vanished at the bare echo of his voice. But although I cannot accuse myself of a word that made him frown, I remember how much he must have lacked amusement from one whose love, though

deep, was silent; and whose anxious, thoughtful character, united to delicate health, rendered her an unassuming companion for one so sought after, so admired, so brilliant as Mansfield. Men have greater temptations than ever, of late years, to lure them from their homes. Those garish clubs! where everything is done to render a man perfectly and entirely independent of his own house! People little consider how a separation in amusements leads to a separation of interests. I tried to enter into his, and, strange as it will sound to you, though I am now deserted, I feel assured my duties have been so fulfilled, he cannot fail to remember, at one time or other, that he has one unchanging friend, whose lip never spoke reproach—whose heart never beat but with love for him. I fear you will hardly understand me, when I say that in this is my unspeakable consolation—in this, forsaken as I am now, shall I triumph in the end. Yes, my dear uncle, if women have patience to endure, they may die but they *must* conquer. Do not mistake me—I mean by *conquer*, the achievement of no command, the exercise of no authority; but I do mean that it will be their exceeding glory to win back the wanderer—to find him return—to save him for time, and, through God's blessing, for eternity. This is a Christian woman's triumph—a triumph in which angels will rejoice. I do not say I shall achieve this *now* with Mansfield—he is still in the toils; but when passion fades, and reason and affection return, he will return with them. Do not think I do not feel what all women *must* under such circumstances, nor do not give me more merit than I deserve. I love him—that of itself is sufficient to keep me in the path of duty; but even if I did not, I would, I hope, do from principle what I now do from affection. It is only then I should deserve praise. Poor Mansfield! he will have that to contend with hereafter that will bitterly try his temper and character—the falling away of summer friends, which like summer flies, vanish at the first chill of winter—the loneliness and self reproach—the restricted means—the impossibility of indulgence in tastes and refinements which habit has rendered necessary—the coldness of the few whom he respects. These form his future—a future that would drive him to utter despair,

or more degraded sin, unless some haven be opened to receive him."

There was much more, but this is all that need be quoted from a letter that startled and astonished him much—by which her feelings could not be comprehended, nor her mind understood. She was already gone when Uncle Oliver received the letter—gone with her child, his maid, and the faithful Lewis.

"Have you heard the news?" exclaimed Mrs. Joseph Smith, as a lady of her acquaintance entered the drawing-room, and discovered Mr. Orepoint holding a skein of worsted which she was winding for her "crochet." "I am really quite broken-hearted and half-ashamed that one so nearly related to me should be so tried, and so lost, because there never *was* anything so foolish. Madeline Mansfield has given up the whole of her marriage-settlement to clear away all the debts and things that tormented her good-for-nothing husband. So much; but *that* is not all. He would not come back to sign the papers which were necessary, and so she is quietly gone to find him. Now, did you ever, in all your life, hear of such a thing?—putting in practice what we read of in old books—only meant to be read, not done, you know, my dear. I never could have believed such folly—the foolish, foolish woman; and for such a husband!"

"Most true," said Mr. Orepoint, while working with marvellous industry at a knot in the lamb's-wool; "for such a husband—or for any husband!"

"I wanted to ask you," resumed the visitor, "if there will be an auction at the poor Mansfields'? It is a matter in which I feel the deepest interest."

"I don't know; but if there should be, and I could get Smith, by some miracle, into a good humour, I should like that harp—it is such a love!"

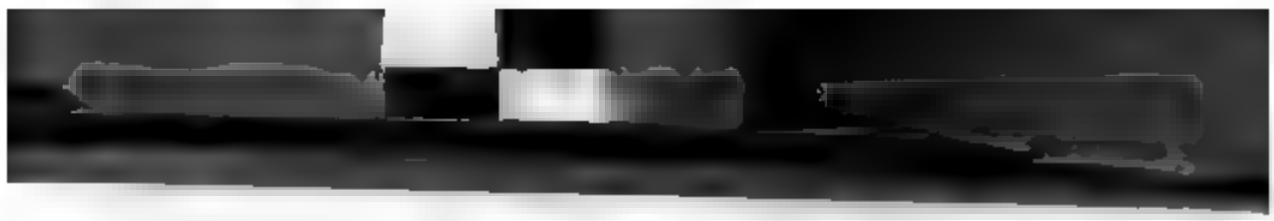
"I shall certainly go and see the things, whether I buy or not," half yawned Mr. Orepoint. "I always doubted the console-tables being real mosaic; and I must ascertain, as I have a bet at the club about them."

"Everything in the house was real," said Mrs. Smith, bridling a little—for she fancied the observation a "slap" at the family—"I assure you everything in the house was real."

"Except the happiness," sneered the man about town—"*except the happiness.*"

PART THE THIRD.

POOR Madeline! she had overrated her strength and powers of endurance; the nearer she drew to Paris, the more nervous she became—the less fitted for the task she had set herself. At one time she would order the postilions to double their speed, and the next direct them to go slower, for that she was distracted by the rapidity of movement. More than once she felt she had done foolishly in bringing her child with her. She entertained no idea of using him, as in a drama, to draw her husband back. She knew this to be equally mean as useless, and that nothing but *time* could restore her husband to himself and to her.



As the carriage whirled through the streets of Paris, Madeline's heart beat so quickly, that she could hardly breathe: even the servants seemed too absorbed to note the strangeness of the motley city. Arthur had been some time asleep, and when the postilions drew up at the hotel, Mrs. Mansfield felt completely paralysed; she could not move. Her blood, stagnant for a moment, rushed suddenly to her head, which swam and reeled; and although her maid assured the servants that her mistress was only suffering from fatigue, she feared she was actually dying.

The next day, when bodily exertion had somewhat abated, Madeline collected her thoughts, and endeavoured to arrange the best, because the most effective, mode of appealing to her husband. She ascertained that he was still in Paris. The lawyer was expected to arrive that evening, or the next morning. Should she suffer him to see Mansfield first, or should she go herself to her husband? There would have been no cause for deliberation, if she was certain of seeing only him. She would go at once; but could she bear to meet *another?* "Nothing will happen to me, good Lewis," she said, in reply to his respectful protest,—"nothing, believe me. Let the man drive on." The servant bowed; and the uneasy machine, lined with crimson-velvet—a specimen of finery and discomfort—proceeded to rattle over the ill-paved streets. "Open the door, Lewis," she said; "I will myself inquire."

"May God protect her!" muttered the old servant; "how pale and resolute she looks, and yet how gentle!"

To Madeline's inquiries, the attendant who answered said that Monsieur was out, but "Madame" was at breakfast. Mrs. Mansfield paused, and the repeated question of "Who shall I say wishes to see her?" fell unheard upon her ear. She walked on.

It was a strange, I had almost written an unnatural, meeting—vice and virtue face to face—and yet such scenes occur almost daily in this great world, without many taking note of them. The unhappy woman, whom Madeline found reading one of the frivolous journals of the day, rose to receive her with an ease and grace of manner which, at any other time, or from any

other person, would have at once prepossessed her in her favour. She requested her to sit, but Mrs. Mansfield was for a few moments incapable of motion. She stood with her eyes fixed upon the frail and delicate-looking Italian songstress, and at last, in as firm a voice as she could command, said, "My name is Mansfield." A tremor, sudden and violent, agitated the frame of the stranger; she attempted to ring the bell, but her arm fell powerless at her side; her lips moved, but no sound escaped them; and at length, after various ineffectual struggles, she fainted. Mrs. Mansfield moved to where she had fallen upon the couch, from which she had risen on her entrance. She looked at her pale face, and, upturned as it then was to the light, she saw how much older she was than she had imagined, and what strong lines, passion and—it might be her imagination, but she thought—sorrow had eaten into her exquisite and delicate features. She poured over her brow some *eau de Cologne* from a *flaçon* that stood on the table, and pushed a pillow beneath her head. As she gazed on one who had done so much to destroy her peace, she felt suffocated; acute pains darted through her frame, and her head and temples throbbed violently. She was there, alone and powerless—her for whom *she* had been deserted. All that Madeline had ever heard or read of demons taking possession of the human form crowded her confused mind. How beautifully hideous the woman became the longer she gazed! She bent over her to examine more keenly the features she hoped never again to see, and her eyes wandered to an ornament that, suspended from a black velvet ribbon, glittered on her bosom—*it was her husband's miniature!* If a serpent had stung her, she could not have writhed under a more bitter pang. Strange it was that she, knowing all she did, should in a moment become so changed. Strange that a disposition to *revenge* should rush through her heart and brain, nerving her arm, so that she could have clutched and used a dagger in the wild anguish of that fearful moment. As if the fiend had fully prepared for that terrible passage of her fevered life, almost beneath her hand, close to where the insensible woman lay, beside the very pillow, was a glittering stiletto, one of those with jewelled

handles which are used upon the stage; but the momentary frenzy passed away as rapidly almost as it came. Bewildered by its unknown violence, dreading herself, chilled in every pore, as if the burning fever of the past emotion had drawn vitality even from her shivering heart, she staggered to the window, and throwing up the cumbrous frame, gasped in the reviving air, as if she had never breathed it before.

When she recovered herself, she saw the stranger looking around with a *distrait* air, rising slowly from the couch, and passing her hand repeatedly across her brow, as if she was recalling the events of the minutes past. When she perceived Madeline, she clasped her hands and screamed. Mrs. Mansfield, perfectly restored, said, "Make no noise; you shall hear me; you owe me more than a few moments' silence."

"You will not hurt me," exclaimed the trembling foreigner—"you will not hurt me."

"May God forbid that I should hurt you! I would rather save you from yourself," was the reply. When Madeline recommenced, her voice was weak and feeble, but it gained strength as she continued. The Italian listened at first with compressed lips, a haughty and determined gathering of her brows, and her small hands so tightly clasped together, that the jewels by which her fingers were encircled pressed into the flesh, while her eyes were fixed on the ground. At first, too, Madeline's words came slowly from her lips. She drew a picture of a devoted wife and mother, one who loved as passionately, as firmly, and more holily than the person she addressed could have done—deserted by her husband and the father of her child—for whom? She paused; there was no reply. As she continued, she gained strength and courage. She used no offensive word. She remembered that the Italian was not tutored as she had been; that she was not only born of other blood, but educated—if such tutelage could be called education—in a different world; not thinking her thoughts, hardly understanding her language. Her momentary madness overcome, she was quite her noble self, and that self was full of the charity "which suffereth long and is kind." She spoke of the past—of her deep and devoted love to her husband,

and of his to her; of the present—her utter desolation of heart and spirit, forsaken by him to whose love and protection she had a right given her by the Almighty; of her child—of the effect his father's conduct must have on his after-life; how, despite her exertions to keep him in ignorance of his parent's abandonment of her and himself, he must know it hereafter, and grow up with the consciousness of his father's sin; nay, that on her would devolve the almost impossible task of dividing the sin and the sinner—teaching him to hate the one, and cleave to the other. She then passed, by means of a few rapid but heartfelt words, to the *hereafter* to which they must all come—the *hereafter* of thought and age—leading to the dread hereafter of the grave. Before this, she saw that, however passionate and wilful, however wayward and devoid of woman's most essential virtue, the frail creature she addressed might be, *feeling* was at work within her. Her expressive features changed, her brows relaxed, large tears trembled on her eyelashes, and her fingers moved convulsively. Madeline said, that whatever her feelings might be, whatever she felt towards her, she did not come armed with a wife's authority to reproach, to wound, to insult her; she came as one woman to another, to show her the abyss of guilt into which she had herself plunged, and the misery to which she had devoted others.

Madeline perceived that, prompted by a sudden impulse, she endeavoured to unclasp the velvet from her throat; but her agitation prevented her effecting her purpose. She tore the band apart, flung the miniature on the ground, then springing up, her foot was raised to crush it into atoms. Madeline held her back. "No, no," she said, "*that* shall never be while I am present."

"There!" exclaimed the passionate woman; "you do not hate him this moment as I do—could not curse him as I could."

"See," replied Madeline, "the different character of our affections. You, whom he has so little wronged, would curse him; I, his forsaken wife, the mother of his child, pray for and bless him every hour I live."

"Oh, why!" sobbed the Italian, "*why did no one tell me this before?* I knew he had a wife, but did not think she was like you!" and flinging herself on her knees beside Madeline, and hiding her face in her dress, she became almost convulsed with weeping. It would have needed a sterner heart than Mrs. Mansfield's to have witnessed such sudden agony unmoved. There was none of the hardness of hopeless sin about the frail creature who clung to her - more as a child clings to a mother, than as one woman supplicates another. "Let me weep," she said; "such tears do me good. I never shed such tears before. I thought if you came. you would kill me; but you forgive me. I will sin no more. If you forgive me, I will sin no more." This, and much of the same kind, was said in the musical tones of her native tongue; and Madeline's emotions, strange as it may seem to say so, might well be envied. Here was a glorious Christian triumph. She had wrestled with and overcome herself; she had *forborne* not only violence, but reproach; and if her mission was even still to be accomplished, she had awoke in an erring woman a sense of wrong, a resolve of right—sentiments and feelings which. if properly moved, would lead many a sister from sin to salvation, even at the eleventh hour. Suddenly the Italian put her finger to her lip, and pointed to a door which Mrs. Mansfield had not before perceived. At the same moment she picked up the miniature. placed it in Madeline's hand, and closing her fingers upon it, pressed them to her lips. "He is coming," she said in a hoarse voice; "he was not out—not up; that leads to his dressing room." She flew across the chamber to a door at the other end, then returning and bending towards where Mrs. Mansfield sat, overwhelmed by the expectation of seeing her husband, she muttered something which Madeline did not understand, and sobbing more bitterly than ever, quitted the apartment. Mansfield entered shortly after. Mansfield!—but how worn, how broken down, he looked!—not as one from whom health fades gradually, not as one whom over labour, or over-anxiety, works down from the healthful bright-eyed man to the bent and hollowed shadow of humanity, struggling with the toils and troubles of life, but struggling with an honest purpose

and a clear conscience. Such a one may be bent and bowed to the earth, but he never can have the torn, and soiled, and haggard look, that effaces God's image, in the debauchée, or even in him in whom weakness produces the effects of vice. They looked at each other in silence. Mansfield would have returned whence he came, if he had had the power. While she, first and most enduring in all good deeds, advanced to meet him. She could not speak. She extended her hands towards him—he saw the miniature. "I have seen her," she said; "I have exposed to her her own sin, and she has blessed me for it;" and this was the only allusion she made, during that important interview, to his crime. On the contrary, she endeavoured to draw his attention to the mere business portion of her mission; but this was impossible. He could not attend; he sank into a paroxysm of the deepest despair—reproached himself, reproached her—said he could have endured anything rather than the love she bore him—that it was a curse, a very poison. She heard all this; she heard it all, crushing her love closer and closer into her heart—assuming a coolness of counsel, so as to assure his mind, in its present mood, that it was business - the advantage both would derive in the end, the advantage their child would derive —that brought her there—not denying her affection, but never for a moment dwelling on it. Mansfield caught at the mention of the child, and inquired if he were in Paris. He became at once anxious to see him; he would have him there: but no; he would go to him. It must be evident to all, that mere feelings and affections, however pure and kind they might be, could never have guided Madeline through the perils of this momentous day. Her husband's eyes, unnaturally wandering, now fierce with sudden brightness, now dim, and red, and in-looking, the shivering despair which made him firm in the belief that nothing could save him, the unmanly dread of investigating the debtor and creditor columns of his accounts; all these called for her strength, and made her, while she trembled for *his* reason, exert her own. The vacillations of the man of fashion, from whom the gilding is all worn off—the wit, whose arrows are no longer tipped with brilliants—the man, in fact, once so rich in all but

moral strength, now poor in all things, was as tenderly beloved by his devoted wife as on the day she placed their first-born in his arms; the same rich natural unsullied love hovered with angel wings above the wreck which, like the life-boat, she was just in time to save. There are passages in human nature so difficult to decipher, that the closest observer cannot account for the workings of the various feelings, and their effects, broken up, as they are, by thoughts, and motives, and intentions. Madeline could not understand how it was that her husband left the hotel without seeming to think or care for the creature whose image haunted her, even while she looked upon him. The sight of his child subdued him altogether; and as the little fellow clung round his neck, its father burst into tears so rapid and violent, that his strong frame seemed hardly able to endure the shock. Anxiously did Madeline look for the lawyer's arrival with the necessary papers; every carriage that drove into the courtyard drew her to the window. She knew that if he came *then*, Mansfield would do everything she required: but (oh, the misery of having to do with the unstable!) she could not trust him from hour to hour. She judged of the present by the past. It was nearly night, and no lawyer had arrived. Subdued as her husband was by the emotions of the day, he became suddenly and alarmingly excited, talked wildly and incoherently of his past experiences, and of what his future should be, and wanted Madeline to go with him to the opera. This fancy seemed to have taken possession of his mind altogether. His poor wife would as soon almost have gone to her grave; but he insisted, and she prepared to dress. What a mockery it was, after what she had suffered during the last twelve hours! He faulted the simple arrangement of her hair. "Flowers," he said, "must be mingled there; she could not go with her hair unadorned: if she had not brought them with her, she must send out and buy them. No flowers like the French flowers;" and to delay the time, she did as he desired. But before they were placed in her hair to his satisfaction, the excitement deepened into disease. He complained suddenly of the most racking pain in his head and temples; every sound distracted him, and he could endure

no ray of light; then, in the midst of his fevered description of a favourite song, he paused, and in a voice of child-like confidence, whispered, "Let me lay my head upon your bosom, Madeline; there was its first peaceful repose, and there will be its last;" but there was no repose for a head tortured with distracting fever of the brain. About an hour afterwards, the lawyer arrived, to find the unhappy man in the wildest ravings. If ever Madeline had been tempted to question the will of Providence, it was then. Before the morning dawned, her husband had ceased to recognise her; and in his wanderings, the name of another was frequently mingled with her own. The physicians said that weeks must pass before the patient had a chance of being able to attend to business of any kind, if——and they shook their heads; his frame was debilitated, his constitution anything but strong; they hoped, but they also feared; they had never seen the disease under a worse form. It was useless for the man of business to wait; when needed he would return. One thing it is necessary for the honour of human nature to record; when he arrived in London, and stated to the various persons whom the subject concerned, the circumstances under which he had left Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield, they, without one single exception, expressed their determination to wait until Mrs. Mansfield should be able to act *for them*, so convinced were they of her noble mind and high integrity. This compliment, when conveyed to her in the business-like letter of the solicitor, certainly made her heart beat more fervently, though she read it by the dim lamp-light of a chamber, sick well nigh to death. It was matter of astonishment to Madeline's friends how she ever lived through a month of never-ending watching and suspense. There was no rest—no reprieve. It was only the exchange of one anxiety for another. The struggle between life and death, between reason and insanity, was such, that her very devotion to the sufferer would have tempted her to pray that he might be released, had it not been for the blessed faith which, the greater the peril, the wilder the storm, will of a surety go on increasing in the true believer; that which causeth the feeble to cry to the grave for refuge, enableth the brave in

faith to defy death. Thus it was with Madeline. The strength of the spirit withstood the tremor of the flesh. Shaken for a moment, as all Christians are, at times—however oppressed, or worn, or weary, in the twilight, in the noon-day, in the dim midnight watches, even when she deemed him she loved in the valley of the shadow of death—*she never doubted!* Her worthy Uncle Oliver, much as he blamed her, could not avoid following her to Paris, where, despite the kindest intentions in the world, he materially increased her discomfort, by his dislike to the country and to her husband; but nothing moved her from her duty.

She was by her husband's bedside one evening, when Mansfield, who had been for upwards of three weeks in a state that defies description, had fallen into a comparatively quiet sleep; his poor restless head was still, and his arms were quiet. Madeline was thankful for the repose, when she thought she heard voices in the ante-room in low but earnest discourse. The chamber of the sick man was so spacious, that it took her some little time, stealing along on tip-toe, to reach the door. There she found Lewis opposing a lady's entrance—not satisfied with his powers of persuasion, but standing so as to prevent her from entering. Madeline at once knew who the stranger was; but the instant she saw Mrs. Mansfield, she threw herself on her knees, and, in smothered accents, entreated to see Mr. Mansfield once more. "He will not know me," she murmured; "and as I am returning to my own country, I could not bear to depart without imploring you to grant me this act of mercy." Instead of repulsing her, as Lewis expected she would have done, she suffered her to follow her to the bedside; and, though her hand trembled, she shaded the light from his eyes—eyes that, sleeping or waking, were unconscious of all that had occurred, and only saw the dissolving phantoms of a heated brain. The Italian looked long and earnestly upon him; and what passed in her mind can only be known to the Almighty, for she spoke no word. At last, she sunk on her knees by the bedside, and, pressing her face on the counterpane, wept most bitterly. The unconscious sufferer tossed his hands, and as one rested for an instant near

her, she kissed it. Madeline turned away. The quick Italian perceived it, and rising, whispered her, "It is the last—we shall meet no more." She drew the curtain, and added, "And you, can you forgive me?—can you really forgive me? Can you think of, and not curse me? Are you really so good? You are not cold, but calm. Can you forgive the warm blood of the South? You, who know it not, have you that charity in the heart for a sinner?—you, who have walked with your God so long?" With such murmured sentences, she bent lowly before Madeline, who, deeply affected, drew her into another room.

"I do forgive you," she said; "and to prove it, if I can, now or hereafter, by taking from the small share of the comforts of life which I am likely to enjoy, I will bestow on you what will save you from the want that is so often the parent of sin. God knows how gladly I will do it. I would be your friend, and save you. Do not believe that, as a woman, having sinned, you cannot be saved. There are some, even of your own land, who would urge this as a reason for your continuing in sin; but I tell you it is not so: and let this conviction be with you night and day. I, Madeline Mansfield, have told you so—I, who of all others you have most wronged. I repeat what I have learned from the book of life: I say, 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more'"

And they parted. Long after, when that ardent, erring spirit, bright, yet spotted with both folly and crime, pursued a profession replete with dangers and temptations to the purest and the best—often, amid the plaudits of approving hands—often, in the poisoned atmosphere of envy, or the cloying sickliness of flattery, or the dangers of unholy jesting, did that *real* scene, and those blessed words, return to the wanderer's memory; never but to serve—often to save! When the glittering gems, false as the scenes in which they glittered, fell from her brow, and self-reproach—for much that she had left undone, and much that she had done—smote upon her heart—then would the words of forgiveness come to her, full of healing. And in her dreams, the vision of Madeline would stand before her—the image of her, whom, when unseen and unknown, she hated with

a Southern's jealousy ; but who, when seen, won her by conduct so different from anything she had imagined possible, that she became enshrined to her poor erring spirit, as a holy memory, for ever.

How many are there who pass through life without noting that in the exercise of forbearance is a mighty power—a power felt and appreciated when the storm and the reproach would be forgotten ! At last, the patient, whom Madeline had so watched and so prayed for, began to recover ; his consciousness returned, and then he hung upon Madeline's words and Madeline's looks, with apparently the same feeling which makes a child cling to its mother. His mind was even more feeble than his body. When he was able to endure an increase of light in his room, he begged that the curtain might be withdrawn ; and Madeline sat writing with noiseless pen by his side. Suddenly she looked up, and saw his eyes fixed upon her.

" Speak," he said, " speak ; for I can hardly believe that you are there."

Madeline smiled—a smile which expressed more than mere mortal beauty ever could—and said a few fond words.

He passed his hand over her face, and amid her hair, and then felt the arm, so thin and worn, that not a trace of its roundness remained. " How changed," he sighed—" how sadly changed ; and it is all my work !" and he sobbed and cried, covering his face with his hands. This little scene was frequently repeated. She could not go near him without his recalling what she was, and blaming himself ; while she assured him that now, as he was recovering, she was quite happy, and felt her happiness must increase. But time passed, and was passing, and their affairs must be speedily arranged. The agitation might cause a relapse, a return of inflammation of the brain, and either destroy life or deprive her husband of reason. Still, he was much better, and she prepared him for his lawyer's presence. He came ; but before Mansfield knew of his being in the hotel, he visited Uncle Oliver, who was laid up with a fit of the gout. While Madeline's husband slumbered in the easy chair, to which he had been removed, she went to her uncle's room, and found the old gen-

tleman in a great state of excitement. As she entered, she heard such epithets as "the fool," "the idiot," "the senseless, brainless fool." "It's no use, Mr. Bramwell," quoth the old gentleman, when Madeline stood at his side—"it's no use; but there is no such thing as a sensible woman—no such thing. One rushes into one extreme, like Mrs. Smith; and the other, like Madeline: and yet, I'll tell you what it is, sir," he continued, moving his gout-stool with his stick—"I'll tell you what it is—(hang this stool! the French air, sir, has spoiled it altogether—warped the English elm. more than it could ever do to the English oak) —I'll tell you what it is, it does not at all signify to such a woman as Madeline who she marries; it is sufficient that he is her husband—that is all, sir. If she had the misfortune to be married to a Frenchman—I put the case as strongly as I can—if she, Madeline, had the misfortune, though an Englishwoman, to be married to a Frenchman. even to Bonaparte, my belief is, she'd have followed him into exile—there!" and he struck his stick violently upon the floor.

"My dear uncle!" said Madeline.

"Here, again, she gets over me, sir, with her softness, and drives me mad with her resolution. Look at her; the shadow of herself—fading—faded; nearer death at this moment than he she has been watching over and praying for, as if he were a saint instead of a sinner."

"A saint would not need my prayers," replied Mrs. Mansfield, parrying the old gentleman's bitterness.

"A rascal!" persisted Uncle Oliver.

"Uncle," interrupted Madeline, "you know I suffer neither hard names nor hard words towards him."

"Look at her now," said the old gentleman; "see how crimson her cheek is, and how her lip trembles the moment a word is said against him; and now, because she will neither quarrel with me, nor hear him abused, she walks out of the room. I'd give a hundred pounds to feed the Frenchmen for one day with good roast beef, if she would only call him a rascal! but she won't—she will not. Mansfield will sign anything she'll ask now, and so she'll give up her property; and when he

gets better, he'll be off again. The evil spirit is lulled, not expelled; and then, when the devil (who likes new and rich faces) bids him good-bye, she'll believe he is reformed. My poor Madeline, my bright pure spirit, so like my sister! And you and I, Bramwell, who would have made such admirable husbands—you and I"—and the old gentleman shook his head.

"But, sir," observed Mr. Bramwell, "do you not see that Mrs. Mansfield's happiness consists in the very sacrifices you deplore? She is like the angels—rejoicing over the one that repenteth; like the martyrs—glorying in her duty, as they did in their faith; and, despite what you say, she will have her great reward! It is a clear impossibility that such goodness and such virtue will be without their recompense. Mr. Mansfield will strengthen in her strength, and become a new creature: he will see the world as it is—he will."

"He will do no such thing," exclaimed bitter Uncle Oliver. "When he does, I will eat my crutch!"

"Remember your promise," said Mr. Bramwell, laughing. Uncle Oliver remained silent, and the lawyer again spoke. "And worn and faded as Mrs. Mansfield looks, after sufferings that would have killed persons with stronger bodies but weaker minds, she is not so worn and faded as the creature who has destroyed her husband's peace and her own by perpetual jars. Such scenes as have passed between Smith and his wife make me bless my bachelor estate—A woman who cannot indulge her husband, may marry a man of five-and-twenty, but ought never to venture on five-and-thirty. We stiffen mightily in all things after we pass thirty. Don't you think so, sir?"

"No, sir; *I* do not," said the testy Oliver. "I am an example to the contrary. I am at sixty-six, as pliant as a willow; if I were not, how could I have gone through all I have, and in France too; but I heard that Elizabeth had been spoken lightly of, and that Joseph has absolutely got a habit of drinking."

"They say so," observed the cautious lawyer.

"They!" repeated Uncle Oliver, angry at what he knew was a fact receiving confirmation. "And who are 'they?' Every-

body—nobody. 'They!' 'They' is a regular scandal-monger —an unknown, unacknowledged, unseen, unanswered, unauthorised creation, quoted on all occasions, and, be he ever so great a liar, believed, while doubted—augh!"

"You asked me, or I should not have spoken on the subject, as Mrs. Smith is your relation," said Mr. Bramwell.

"And what is that to me?" exclaimed Uncle Oliver. "Do you think I am such a fool as to care for her the more for that? Relationship is no guarantee for liking or protection; if it were, would Mansfield have behaved as he did to that angel?"

"On the other hand, would she behave as she does to any——"

"Not a fair answer, sir," interrupted Uncle Oliver. "She'd behave well to every one. What do you think of her telling that woman that she'd——But it's no matter; she little thought I heard her. When I speak of Madeline, I become a fool." And the old gentleman wiped his eyes, and then holding his stick by its crooked head, made it perform sundry evolutions in the air until it unfortunately struck his gouty toe, and then he roared so loud, as to recal his niece, and bring little Arthur scampering into the room.

Those who have not watched the fearful ravages of a disease such as Mr. Mansfield encountered, are invariably shocked at the appearance of the convalescent; and while his friends. who have been with him day and night, think how much better he is, strangers believe him to be on the brink of the grave. The witty, high-spirited. handsome Mansfield - the man whose word established the reputation of a horse, the character of a tailor, the excellence of a new opera or a new novel, and whose bow, so slight, yet, when necessary, so impressive. was reported as "the most elegant thing in the Park"—was now a worn, attenuated, panting skeleton, unable to think, but not to feel, tears rushing on the smallest occasion to his aching eyes; while his mind, reeling from over-wrought excitement and disease, could not rely upon itself. It was piteous, while he signed, and assigned, and did as Madeline requested, to hear his child-like entreaties that

she would not wrong herself, that she would leave him to perish rather, that she would let things take their course; while she soothed and calmed him, fixed, in her high-mindedness, in her purpose to save his credit at the last, and pass most likely all the remainder of her days in comparative poverty, glorying—as she smoothed the abundant tresses of her boy's head—in the feeling, that her practice and precept would, by God's blessing, give her such power over her son's education, that he would feel hereafter that the glory of an honest name was better than the glitter of dishonoured gold.

"Did you see her when her folly was completed?" whispered Uncle Oliver to Mr. Bramwell. "Did you ever see such a change in a human being? You would have thought she had just received, instead of having just resigned, a fortune; while her husband was ya-ing and ha-ing, and wiping his eyes;" and then Uncle Oliver wiped his. "Now, I suppose, they will have about four hundred a-year to live and educate their child on. The child's maid, I find, is to return to England with you; and to-morrow, as Mansfield is able to be moved, they leave the hotel, and go to Versailles. Ah, sir, she has sold every jewel she had in the world, and offered Lewis six months' wages to leave them; but the old fellow fell on his knees, and entreated to remain. Don't talk to me about the wickedness of human nature. Sir, I glory in human nature. There are specimens of it in all ranks of life, that should have temples built to them. Those who undervalue it do not deserve well of it; you may carry *that* as a conviction to your grave."

"I believe you are right," said Mr. Bramwell.

"I am, sir; I am always right; and I am right in leaving Madeline for a time. It breaks my heart that I have not thousands to give her. I try her too much, and she has plague enough without me. I want to see after that fool Smith and his wife, and shall be in London a day or two after you."

Madeline was now alone with her husband, suiting her expenditure to their narrow means, and rejoicing that she had been able to defray the cost of his illness from a fund raised by the sale of her jewels. At first, Mansfield's returning health

brought back many of his old habits, and though he tried to restrain them, the very necessity for doing so produced an irritability of temper that would have worn out any human being less sweet than Madeline. It is certain that we are less grateful for large than for small sacrifices. If Mrs. Mansfield had been content to think, "I have given up a fortune to save and to reclaim him, and will do no more," she would never have succeeded. A great sacrifice is very frequently felt as a reproach, when a small one is considered a mark of affection. Once, and only once, he questioned her as to the events of the day when she visited his hotel. Certainly it would be easier for any woman to praise the exquisite delicacy and truth of her statement, than to follow her example; it is the passage in her life which has always been to me the most exalted. It was a glorious thing to hear her doing justice to one whom a woman of ordinary mind would have considered a rival; while, by her noble conduct, she, without intending it, raised herself immeasurably above all comparison with the Italian. Mansfield, abashed more by her heroism of the heart, than by all her more business-like exertions or patient endurance, implored her forgiveness, and spoke of his being so degraded in such sinless eyes as hers, with the simplicity of a child that makes confession at its mother's knee. She told him how the spirit of jealousy and revenge had stirred within her, and how little she deserved that he should rate her so highly. And now, poor as they were, Madeline began to feel the reward of her forbearance. Never, in the days of his early love, had Mansfield evinced the same continuing tenderness, guarded by a watchfulness over himself, that he did now; he seemed to look upon her as a protecting angel. When still weak from any exertion, he leant upon her arm in their morning and evening walks; when she worked, or read, or wrote, or philosophised in her own quiet way (which *she* could not think philosophy) upon past times, and tried to make Mansfield deem well of Uncle Oliver, or play the tutor to his son, an occupation which seemed to interest him in earnest—at all these times he gained not only strength of body, but all unhealthy excitements being far from him, his mind, refined

and polished, strengthened also. He was, like all of his peculiar temperament, much the creature of habit, and what he did to-day he wished to do to-morrow. His affairs had been at last skilfully managed, and he could not meet a man whom he need have been ashamed to look in the face. Still, the idea of being called "poor Mansfield" haunted his imagination so much, that Madeline had never hinted at their return to England, which she still fondly thought of as their home. It certainly did them both honour to see how they brought their habits to the level of their circumstances, enjoying existence, notwithstanding the shadows left by the past. Mansfield would have been much happier, had it not occurred to him so frequently as to retard his recovery, that his wife was hastening before him to another world; and certainly those who had known her a few months before, would hardly have recognised the outline of her former self. They had been inhaling the soft evening breeze, which does not bring, as with us, those heavy dews fraught with danger, now sauntering along a shaded alley, and then sitting upon the trunk of a fallen tree, when, just as they were seated, they heard a laugh from the path they had quitted, and immediately after the sounds of English voices.

Mansfield grew at once red and then pale. "It is really too bad," he exclaimed; "we must plunge farther into the depths of France, to escape these perpetual intrusions."

Madeline's colour also heightened, but from a different cause—she thought she knew the female voice. "How shall we retreat?" she said; "we must pass them to get home."

Mr. Mansfield rose, and took hold of Arthur's hand. "If we walk quickly," he replied, "we can pass the wood before they leave it." But he miscalculated; a group of persons emerged from the shade as they reached the spot of which Mr. Mansfield had spoken.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed the lady in a loud strange tone, "there are the poor Mansfields!" and the same moment Mrs. Mansfield's hand was grasped, and her cheek kissed, by little Mrs. Smith.

As well as Mr. Mansfield's confusion and annoyance permitted him to observe, there were two ladies and two gentlemen of the party, one of whom was Mr. Orepoint, who advanced and held out his hand to Mr. Mansfield.

"Well," continued Mrs. Smith, with more than her usual volubility, "who could have fancied meeting you here, after all that we heard; but, Madeline, you were always an angel!" Then turning to Mansfield, she said, holding up her finger, while her jewelled cassolette dangled from her hand, "Ah, you naughty boy! Indeed, you are such a naughty man, that I don't think I shall speak to you! You know I am not at all like my cousin!"

"I am quite aware of it," said Mr. Mansfield, bowing proudly.

"Not a bit. My goodness, how ill you both look! But no wonder, you have gone through so much. We drove down here to see the water-works, or fire-works, or whatever they are; but it's the wrong day, so we must come again."

"And where is your husband?" inquired Madeline; while Mr. Mansfield, having regained his self-possession, addressed a few words to Mr. Orepoint.

Mrs. Smith's countenance darkened. "Oh, you need not put on your most proper face. We go on much as usual; but he is at the place where we dined. He remained with another of our party, drinking brandy and water and discussing moral theories. I tell you frankly, Madeline, I shall not be able to bear him much longer."

"Hush, here they come," said her companion, touching Mrs. Smith's sleeve; "here they come; do let us run away down this valley; I know the path. *Allons, allons, messieurs!*"

"*Au revoir!*" exclaimed Mrs. Smith, taking Mr. Orepoint's arm, and following the lady—"*au revoir!*"

And they did come. Joseph Smith—and his friend, I suppose I must call him—stood, not very steadily, either the one or the other, before the Mansfields, while the tone of the *revoir* fluttered and ached in Madeline's ear.

"I beg your pardon," said poor Smith, lifting his hat, for he did not recognise them immediately, and he looked stupidly

wise while he spoke—"I beg your pardon; but have you seen my wife?"

Few words ever caused Mrs. Mansfield a more acute pang than these. The kind, simple, absent, and thoughtless man, so completely, so entirely changed. There was a tipsyness about his dress and gestures—in the way his foot moved when he meant to stand still, as if it clawed the earth for support—in the careless rest of his hat, and the slothful sit of the stock and half-buttoned waistcoat. Absent and strange he had always been, but it used to be the absence of mind, not the presence of semi-intoxication.

"I am sure I beg your pardon," he repeated; "but have you seen my wife?"

"Do you not know me?" said Mr. Mansfield.

"And me?" added Madeline.

He was, indeed, earnestly rejoiced to see them. "I know you!" he repeated; "to be sure I do, and have heard so much about you. Why, you were town-talk for a month; first abused, and then praised, and then forgotten. Know you!"

Mansfield turned away, and Mrs. Mansfield raised her finger to her lip. Mr. Smith understood the sign.

"I would rather see you, Mrs. Mansfield, than any living creature," he said. "You are the only one who can do anything with *her*. She is worse than ever. We separated—yes, that was it—and then it was made up by Uncle Oliver, and I agreed to bring her here for a treat; but we quarrelled all the way. And here we met Orepoint—and then—and then—these last two days she has been like——But it's the champagne," he added in a confidential tone. "She drinks—she does, faith! She drinks—and when a woman does that, why it's impossible to tell what a woman may do who is too fond of champagne."

"Or a man either," said Madeline, looking steadily at him.

"That's severe for you," he said, returning the look with his dim and filmy eyes. "A man like me, who can propound great moral theories, is not likely to do that; it's contrary to all philosophy. But she's a fool, and you cannot give to fools the understanding of the wise. I never could comprehend, myself,

how our little disagreements grew into such feuds, though I had an inkling of it" - he paused with a most painful gravity— "the Sunday before we left home, when the rector preached about a grain of mustard-seed growing into a great tree; that was it, our first disagreement was a *grain* of mustard seed, our last, the *great* tree. My life is a curse to me—a deliberate curse. Perhaps you could talk to her. But how very odd I am. I must go and console Mansfield, and tell him all the people said."

"For Heaven's sake," interrupted the anxious wife, 'do not speak to him at all of the past; he cannot bear it. Oh! dc understand me; Mansfield cannot bear to hear of the past."

"Oh, very well - as you please," answered Smith, with an air of stupid astonishment; "as you please. Not hear of the past! oh, very well, I'll take care to remember that. I remember, too, what you told me about clubs, and I told her of it; but she drove me there to get rid of me. That's a charming thing: a man marries to make his home comfortable, and then his wife drives him to the club - ah!"

Madeline could endure a great deal, but she could endure this no longer; it was sickening—more than she could bear. The mixture of truth and stolidity, the aspect of the man so changed, his hanging cheeks, and meaningless eyes, all spoke the rapid issue of what she feared. Many persons are knitted together, and endure the tortures (which early and steady attention to the golden rule, BEAR AND FORBEAR, would prevent) for their children's sakes; but the Smiths were not bound by any such tie, and the result was before her. Sad as it was to see the wreck of such a human being, it is almost impossible to conceive the revulsion of feeling which Madeline experienced when her eyes rested upon her husband. Worn and ill as he still was, she thought he had never looked so dignified, as if, having cast away all that obscured his better qualities, he had grown above himself Contrary to his usual practice, Mansfield told Mr. Smith where they resided, and then they pursued their homeward walk; while Smith amused a party of Frenchmen whom he met, by asking "if they had seen his wife?"

"Madeline," said her husband, after they had entered her apartment, "I do not think I ever felt the fulness of what you have done for me until within the last hour. My God! if you had been such a woman as your cousin, what should I have been now? How you have borne with me, and why, I cannot tell. I have been your bane, while you have been my blessing. May He, who gave me an angel as my guardian, make me in some degree worthy of her. Oh, if I could but obliterate from your memory my past neglect, my unfaithfulness, I should care for nothing else; for, in all the business transactions which you investigated, there was no dishonour!"

"Thank God," replied Madeline, "there was not, and I knew there would be none; and He also knows, that my love is as deep for you as ever."

"I know that," he replied; "*but your trust is gone.*"

She raised her eyes to his—eyes whose lustre had never been dimmed by the least wavering of untruth.

"*It is gone!*" he repeated passionately.

"It was gone, dear Mansfield," she answered. "*It has returned;* it has been returning long, when, day by day, I have heard you read and explain to our boy the words of Holy Writ. When we knelt together in this land of a faith foreign to our own, and prayed to our Creator, as I think we never prayed before; when I have seen how eagerly you drank of the fountain of living waters, strengthening your spirit, without the parade of words, or cant of reformation, oh! how I have bowed in gratitude to Him who has poured His grace into your soul! Yes, I do trust; for your trust is established where the powers of evil cannot prevail against it." And Mansfield believed her. Well he knew, that though he might deceive himself, Madeline would never deceive him. Is not the establishing such gracious confidence as this one of the best triumphs of wedded life?

It was long since they had enjoyed such happiness; the night was passing, but they noted it not; former times were talked of, but Madeline had the blessed power of abstracting their sting. And when she painted a future, it was not with the vividness of an exaggerating dreamer, but with the reality of the exercise of

Christian conduct, calling the best energies of our nature into action, in the full confidence that such is the desire of God, and trusting that He will bless them.

Mansfield hardly ventured to plan for the future, though his mind, healthier than it had ever been, purified by the fire of adversity it had passed through, was beginning to desire a more active and useful existence. They watched the moon climbing the heavens, and the stars silently pursuing their noiseless and appointed paths, and were astonished when they found it was past midnight. Mansfield was about to shut the window at which they had been seated, when they heard a rush in the garden, and, guided by the light, footsteps ascended to their room, and the haggard face and wild beamless eyes of poor Smith glared upon them.

"Is she here?" he inquired breathlessly; "is my wife here? Have you seen her? For the sake of mercy, tell me so."

The Mansfields assured him they had not; and he then told them that neither she nor Mr. Orepoint had returned to the hotel, although their companions had—saying they missed them in the wood, and expected to find them there. This intelligence completely sobered the unfortunate husband, although it had evidently not restored him to his senses. He sent the police in search of "his wife" in every direction; and then it occurred to him that it might have been only a freak to frighten him, and that she had gone to her cousin. Pained and distressed, the Mansfields entreated him to remain with them until the morning. He consented to do so, weeping like a child, then bursting forth into loud indignation. Then wailing again—"If she had only borne my little faults—oh, if she had but borne them—instead of being what I am—what I feel I am—I might have been honoured in a peaceful home. Let no man say I will be honoured, I will be respected, unless his wife wills he shall be so." The first light of day was streaming through the sky, as they watched the unhappy man making his way through the mazes which led to the old château, of which they occupied a portion; and as they closed the window, Madeline said, "There

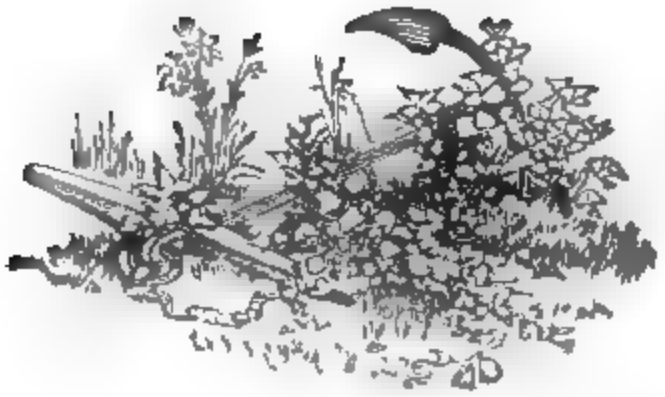
was truth in what he said of the grain of mustard-seed—their first quarrels were hardly as large as that; yet see the fearful termination. I warned and watched, but her folly and obstinacy were both deaf and blind."

Mrs. Mansfield never saw her unfortunate cousin after that night, though, in three weeks, she heard she was deserted by a man who never cared for anything beyond amusement, and who lamed her husband for life in a duel in the Bois de Boulogne; and the jesters of the time called him "The Wife Hunter!" He is sometimes seen at the British Museum, and sometimes limping about the genuinely old curiosity shops—having taken to antiquity as a solace, instead of brandy, which he says Mrs. Mansfield persuaded him to give up—not, however, before it had injured his constitution.

It is time this story was concluded; and yet how limited its space to describe the events of a life! I have, after all, made but a feeble sketch of Madeline; and though Uncle Oliver has not ate his crutch, he confesses he ought to have done so; for he has ceased to call her husband "a rascal."

The Mansfields had not been a year abroad, when an excellent appointment was offered him in one of the public offices. He shrank from a London residence, fearing to meet cold eyes and distant bows from those who revelled *with* and *in* his wealth. And Madeline—what said she? Why, she laughed, and said surely her husband jested; if such looked cold, *they* would look colder, and if a distant bow were given, not only *seem*, but *wish* to cut the giver. And she walked down the streets where once her carriage rolled, with the dignity of a most honoured and honourable woman; and those who saw it were ashamed to call them "the *poor* Mansfields" any longer—for self-dignity commands even a fool's deference. And by degrees, to the delight of the faithful Lewis, carriages drove up to their door, and she received visitors as if they had parted but yesterday, yet declined their invitations as cheerfully as Mansfield had declined "the club;" and then her son—if she had no other reward for her past endurance, his honour and his love might have been envied by the mother of the Gracchi; and his father loved him

as dearly, and was as proud of him as she was—nay *is;* and it is delightful to see how the young honour her; how husbands point her to their wives, and mothers to their daughters; and even while all lament they cannot be like her, yet all *believe in her*, and still she is unconscious that she deserves either praise or admiration.



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